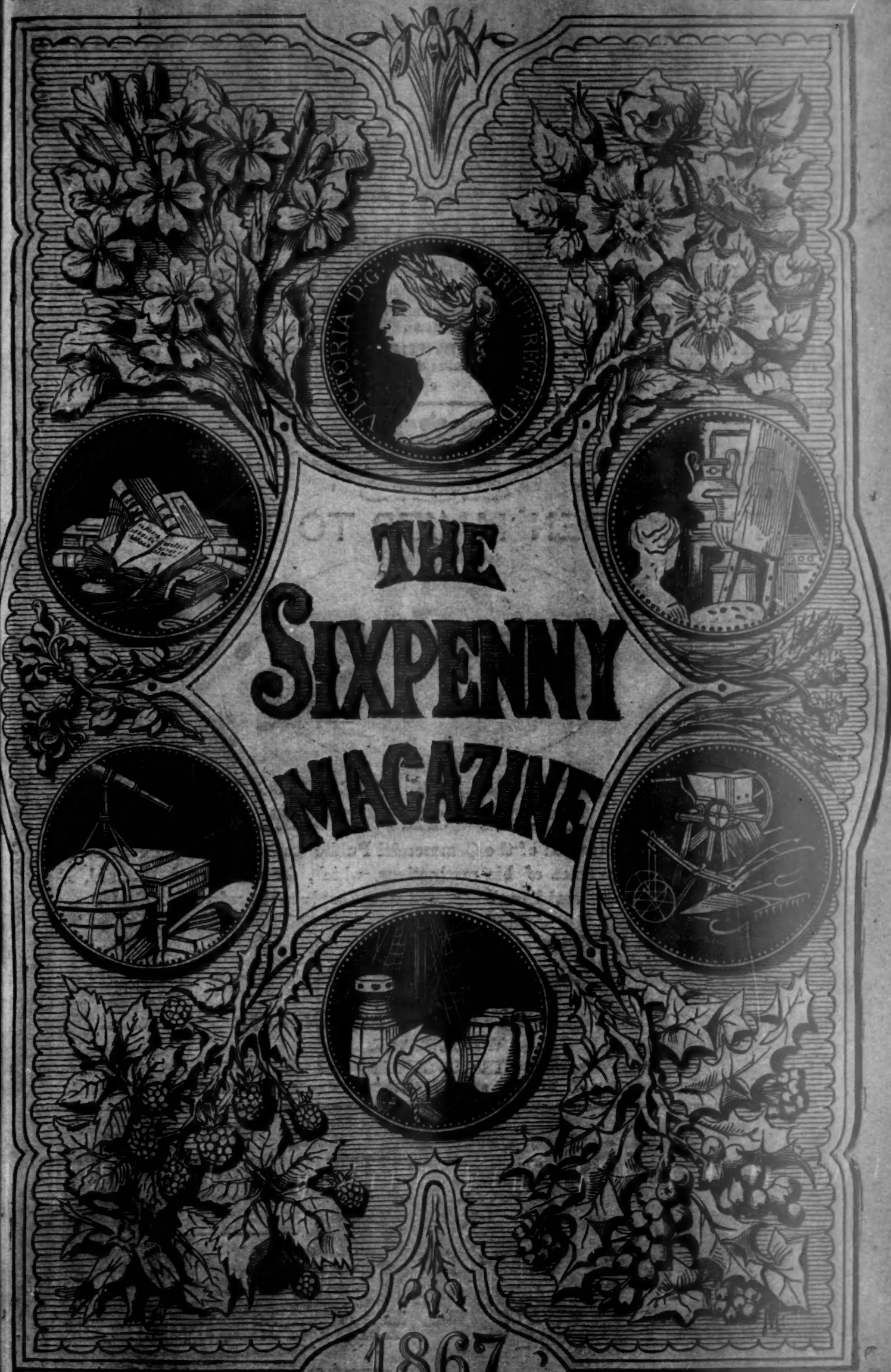


Vol. II.—No. VII.]

SIXPENCE

DECEMBER.



THE
SIXPENNY
MAGAZINE



1867

LONDON: HOULSTON & WRIGHT, 65, PATERNOSTER ROW

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MANOR MELLERAY

CHAPTER XIII.

THE RIVAL MOTHERS.

THE explanation was made. Delicately as might have been expected of Lady Elizabeth, and without revealing too much, Evelyn was made aware that her mother was not exactly worthy of her love. It was a cruel blow. She had thought her excellent, as well as beautiful. She had believed in her, she had revered her, and now the idol was shattered. She must not call her mother. She must give up the hope of that sweet friendship they had projected together. And Lia! she was not to call her sister, nor to know her when they met again! She could not grasp how such a punishment came to be deserved, any more than she could grasp the heinousness of the conduct which called for it. She was too innocent. After the first shock, she returned in part to her previous faith, and persisted in believing that there must have been some mistake, that her mother was more unfortunate than guilty, and begged hard not to be required "to banish her out of her mind," which Lady Elizabeth had reported was Arthur's decree when speaking of it to her. "It would be impossible to do that," Evelyn said. Something would turn up to show that there had been a mistake.

"Oh, if you saw her; if you saw her face!" she cried—"so beautiful, and true-looking, and good; so saintly almost—you would never believe she could do anything wrong. One would think that even if she were tempted, it would be impossible for her to do wrong—that it was not in her nature. If you ever see her face, dear Lady Elizabeth, you will see that, and you will not believe that she is not good," which Lady Elizabeth received doubtfully enough; but she was soon to realise the truth of the ardent girl's remarks. The likeness had been shown to her, and she recognised it at once.

"It is very like her," she said, "she has the same look, sometimes when—when she is speaking to me; and her hair is the very



same colour, and her eyes—but often I have seen a different expression in them. I don't know how to describe it. It is as if she thought everything valueless, everything beneath her notice. I don't think my mother is—very—humble," said Evelyn, looking doubtfully up into her friend's face. "No, I don't mean that exactly; only once or twice it struck me that she thought more about the past than the present—living in the past, and enduring the present as it were—and there would come such a mournful look, but that not often. I shall never forget when she came into the room first: Lia and I standing there, and looking at her, and the way she laid her hand on Lia's shoulder. Oh, it was so beautiful! Not like what one would see in others, you know. And the expression of her face made me think of what I had read of roses growing with snow, somewhere or other—I think it's Mexico—so much beauty with so much coldness. She told me afterwards that she was very unhappy then; that she had just parted with Ralph—my brother—and I could believe it."

Mrs. Rothesay's plan had fallen to the ground. Evelyn was once more at Manor Melleray, and everything was to go on as usual. The guests were there still, and the following day, when Evelyn found herself in the drawing-room, and heard the talking and the laughing, and saw the animated faces and the goings-on, she wondered exceedingly, thinking what had happened to her since she was there last. Letitia had warned Sydney not to make known that affair of her being lost in the streets, as there was no use in there being a row about it until they would see would she be found, and she had gone back to Mrs. Berners' this morning. But the following day she was to come for the ball, and after that they would go to Scotland—she, and her husband, and Sydney. The sight of Evelyn created no surprise, some had scarcely missed her, and those who did were told she had gone to London with Mrs. Rothesay. But Lord Thalberg declared that those three days had been days of penance for him.

"Such a stupid lot!" he said confidentially to Evelyn. "Arthur and my sister Jennie are the only two I can endure. Frosty is about the worst of them all; and as to that Miss Challis, I think her awfully conceited. Don't you? I thought you'd never come back. What on earth took you to London at this time, when there's not a soul in it? It's not to look at Westminster Abbey and that sort of thing. Oh, no; I won't believe it. Got tired of us all here, I suppose, and wanted to let us see how badly we could do without you."

But Evelyn protested against this view being taken; she could never tire of Manor Melleray, but Lady Elizabeth thought she would like to go to London, as Mrs. Rothesay was going; and, in-

deed, she did feel very glad of it too—"For, you know," she said, "it's not the same to me as it is to you. I had never been there before, except to pass through it, when I was coming from school, and once before, ever so long ago, when I was—so little," and she put her hand about three feet from the ground, to show what her height had been at that memorable epoch.

A few minutes afterwards Evelyn was seated with Lady Elizabeth, having made her escape from the drawing-room, where she had been slightly surprised to find Lord Thalberg, as he seldom appeared at Manor Melleray so early as that. But as he told her, there was nothing to keep him at Sherbruce, and he started over to find out if there had been anything heard of her, or when she would come back, not a little thankful that she had actually returned. To which, Evelyn, too much used to his outspoken compliments to be at all disconcerted by them, replied, with a bright look, and a "Yes, indeed, I am back, you see," laughing, as she always did, at the idea he was so fond of advancing, of her presence being necessary to his enjoyment of existence.

She threw open the window of the pink dining-room, to see what kind of a day it was, or to *feel*, rather; the look of the day was not very promising. There was no sun; the sky was of a dull leaden-grey, or, to speak more properly, there was no sky visible at all, except at one point, where those dull leaden-grey clouds—not softish-white, heaped-up masses, shining with the upper light, and rolling about in gorgeous profusion, but one wide-spread sombre veil—broke away to show a faint peep of blue, just enough to dissipate the conjecture that would be sure to arise on the first look-out, that the heavens would grow blacker and blacker, and at length vent their gloom in a tremendous down-pour. Towards that loop-hole of hope her eyes were drawn, and remained fastened, until she saw it grow wider; and suddenly, after a few minutes, there shot from above one ray—one single, glorious ray, to tell that the sun was bent on breaking his way through that heavy canopy, which, for the present, except in that one spot, seemed impervious to his genial advances. Presently there was another fissure, and Evelyn exclaimed, "It *will* be fine; I knew it would; those nasty clouds will have to move off, out of the sun's way. He has made two windows already, and is peeping down to see if the earth is pining for a glimpse of his pleasant face. But, goodness me! the clouds have shut up that last again. I am afraid they'll have the best of the fight, after all. It does not feel *like* rain, at all events; it is so soft and warm, like a calm sunny day in summer."

"It is that very thing which tells me we are near rain," said Lady Elizabeth, who had had a longer experience of nature; "it is too warm and genial a feeling for this time of the year. However

it may not come until evening, or at night. I like such a day as this—so natural in autumn, the mild kind atmosphere, with a fresh breeze breaking through it now and then; the golden brown of the trees and fields, even that very gloom hanging over everything—a tender melancholy of nature over the death of her own works—all have a certain charm for me. And the leaves lying dead on the lawn—though they make one sad, it is a wholesome sadness. I have often heard that old people and delicate people abhor the autumn; I do not feel so—I like it. It is good for one to be reminded that everything must come to an end—that the perfume and brightness of summer must be succeeded by the dreary winter—that one's own heart must sometime stay beating. When the leaves wither, they are not useless, but go to fertilise the earth; and we have the beautiful hope, that when the human soul breathes out its last sigh in the autumn of life, no annihilation ensues, but it is gathered by a Divine Husbandman, and planted anew in the bright fields of heaven. Oh, who would cast that hope away? How could we bear to think of death, deprived of it? What would life be, with nothingness at its close? When I hear of people scoffing at faith, Evelyn, I think of Plato. What would not he give for such a blessing as that these scoffers cast under their feet, little thinking that it is their own souls they are dragging in the mud? His was a pitiable case. The great master-spirit groping for the truth through the obscurity of Paganism! The glorious afflatus burning within almost revealed to him the fact of the Trinity. Pity that he lived a few years too soon—that he was not to follow in the footsteps of Paul!”

“Did not Socrates, too, show some leanings to Christianity?” said Evelyn.

“Yes, and suffered death for it. Plato wrapped himself in the mantle of his speculative thought. He first pierced through the thick darkness, and called aloud to the nations that there was only one true God. I picture him to my mind as a colossal form, with his head above the clouds—his feet fastened firmly in the earth—a mingled expression of sorrow, wonder, and inquiry on the pale, intellectual face; his fore-finger pointing out the distant speck of light, far away in space, but his fellow-creatures are beneath the clouds, and cannot see it. I look on him as a sort of saint. It may be hoped that that restless yearning of his stood for faith in the eye of a merciful Providence. Surely difficulty enhances merit. The rich banker, who decrees a hundred pounds to some charitable institution, and jots it down in his memorandum of expenses, has less merit than the daily labourer, who shares his hard-earned crust with the beggar that passes by the way. And thus I think that we—those amongst us who receive the truth and reject it—and

alas! we hear of many who do so—will not be viewed with the same mercy as that glorious man of old, who wasted out his soul in aspirations after it. But if I go on like this, I shall have you wishing that you had lived so many hundred years ago, to linger in those classic groves, and sit in the halls of Academia, at the feet of the heathen dreamer. Why did you return to me so soon, Evelyn? I wanted you to stay downstairs and enjoy yourself, after all this which has happened.”

It was that very morning, after breakfast, she had made the explanation, and she had then sent her away to get *distracte*, as she had said.

“My best enjoyment is here,” replied Evelyn, somewhat sentimentally, and seating herself at her feet. She had remained at the window until then. “I couldn’t stop thinking of her all the time; and when Lord Thalberg asked me what I was doing in London, I was very near telling him that I had met my mother for one thing, but I recollected in time that you had said I was not to let people know that. I am sure if I did he’d wonder, for I never spoke of her before. You know I never used to think of having a mother; and still, somehow, when she spoke of my being her child, it all seemed quite natural, and I felt as if I could love her so much, and I never once thought of asking any questions, or why we were strangers to each other, until then.”

“Did she make any explanation as to that?”

“Oh, no, except once, that she said she had been very unhappy long ago, and had been forced to part with me when I was a baby; and if you were to see her when she was saying that, you would hardly believe that she had abandoned me of her own accord. Oh, I *do* think that she must have been forced to part with me! How do we know what may have happened?”

Lady Elizabeth did not get time then to quarrel with this tremulous hope, for a servant entered to announce a visitor. The lady had no card, but she desired him to say—“Mrs. Sandringham.”

“It is my mother,” said Evelyn, her face changing slightly; but in that moment of surprise and not a little dismay, too, Lady Elizabeth remembered that the man was standing by, and checked her before the name had actually escaped her lips. It would not do for Miss Dormer’s parentage to become matter of discussion in the servant’s hall. But notwithstanding this little piece of presence of mind, she turned somewhat pale. What was to be done now? Must she encounter the lady herself? It had been settled between her and Arthur that that part of the business should fall to him, as they had foreseen she might do something like this. But he was out, and to refuse to see her, knowing that

she had come from London for the purpose, did seem a little hard. At any rate, it would be a display of rigour, of which Lady Elizabeth was not capable. She was not one to sweep her immaculate robe away with a shudder from the profanating touch of a tabooed sister. She was not ready to shut the outer gates on a desolate Magdalen, and with chaste sternness to close her ears at the utterance of that name. Although she could look with due severity—with woman's severity—on those errors which banished a fellow-creature beyond the pale of society, she could still be merciful; remembering that Master's example, who permitted the sinner of Israel to anoint His feet with her oils and balsams, and dry them in her hair. She had been displeased at the fact of her charge coming into contact with her mother, and resolved that it should never occur again; but when her own dignity and prerogative came to be in question, she was prepared to deal gently with the offender, as she hoped to be dealt gently with. And so, after a little pause of indecision, she gave permission for the lady to be shown in there, hoping that Arthur would return in the meantime, or that she would not require anything to be said beyond the one—that Mr. Levison would not give up his guardianship to satisfy her.

But as the stately Mrs. Sandringham came into the room, her head carried perhaps a little higher than usual, a look of purpose on the calm, proud, classical face, a something expressive of power, of strength, in her carriage, and in the firm hold of her mouth, her pulse quickened; and she regretted more than before that her son was not forthcoming for this encounter instead of herself; she would scarcely be able for this resolute lady. If it was her will she might carry Evelyn off bodily, without her being able to prevent her; but although she knew she would not go to such lengths as that, there was something in her face which proclaimed that she would not be very easily dealt with.

Evelyn, with some trepidation, went through the form of introducing them, having been first embraced by her mother in that ardent way usual to her; and seeing this, it occurred to Lady Elizabeth that she ought to have sent the girl away before permitting this interview. However, there was no help for it now, and considering the sentence that it was become her duty to pronounce, she felt it impossible to regret this one indulgence. She was a mother still, although she had proved herself unworthy of her child's reverence; and Lady Elizabeth could sympathise with what she felt in that embrace. No one was more alive to the feelings of others than was she; and perhaps no one could better understand a mother's heart. Mrs. Sandringham had to do with a merciful opponent, who was not disposed to make more use than was absolutely necessary of the weapons she held.

After that, looking more closely into her face, Lady Elizabeth's thoughts underwent a certain change. That indulgence with which she forearmed herself would not be quite necessary, it seemed. There was no repentance, no consciousness of guilt perceptible. Coldly resolute and very beautiful was the face that met her gaze, without shrinking from it; and it was not a stern gaze that, but a mild, inquiring one. Not a trace of the sinner in those composed features; no shifting, dishonest glances—not a spark of shame. She looked at her in wonder, almost in admiration. Was this really Colonel Dormer's wife that was standing before her, of whom she had heard such wicked things? Yes, as Evelyn had said, the picture was a very good likeness. There was little change. The girl had been lovely; the girl bride it was, after her marriage it was taken; but, ripened into womanhood, she had become more than lovely; and now, at this late prime, she was still very beautiful—a beauty with which few raw, slender girls could compete, for it was elevated by womanly grace and dignity, and her features were almost perfect in their moulding; and her eyes, if less bright than in youth, were still very expressive; but what chiefly won her this pre-eminence was, perhaps, the indifference she showed to the effect of her own appearance, as if perfectly unconscious that she was an uncommon-looking woman; and this, so attractive in the dawning belle, made *her* ten times more so, for it is not often met with in women of her age when beautiful.

And there was, too, a something, an indefinable expression of excellence which forbade the idea of sin in connection with her. She looked at that moment in Lady Elizabeth's eyes, when the thought of her early errors was uppermost, and the punishment they were about to entail; she looked like one that could not do wrong—exactly what her own child had said. And this brought a sense of injustice to her good heart. Could it be that she had judged this woman wrongly; or might there have been some extenuating circumstances to redeem the enormity of that act? But this was nonsense; and yet she still asked herself, could there have been any mistake? She would take a merciful view if possible. She wished she might believe that Evelyn's mother was not altogether so bad as had been said; erring, to be sure, but still less culpable than she had believed her previously. And there was much in her expression to support this merciful view. That woman should be very hardened indeed to come there and meet her eyes, knowing, as, of course, she knew, that she had heard that lamentable story of husband and child desertion, and still not ashamed of her disgracing antecedents. How was it that she looked so good, so guiltless? Was repentance capable of bestowing the expression? or, on the other hand, had vice attained such success

in simulating virtue as to enable Mrs. Sandringham, with her unholy retrospection, to resemble one of those saintly historic women to be seen in some of the continental cathedrals?

But that was not a time to settle the question. Already that wonderful influence which had not worked for her good, was telling. It was with a predisposition to mercy, even though half suspecting that it would be unnecessary, and perhaps contemned, that she waited for her to speak. Evelyn had placed a chair for her mother and then gone to the window. She knew what was coming; that her mother was going to demand her from Lady Elizabeth, and that the latter would refuse. She could not foresee how things would turn out; but it was easy to see there would be some unpleasantness, and she wished heartily that she was not present to witness it. But she dare not attempt to leave the room; her mother might be angry, and Lady Elizabeth might want her, for she knew well that her nerves would not stand much agitation. So she took herself as far as possible from both, thinking they might possibly get on better together when she would not be directly in view. It was a peculiar position for a girl, and that was the best thing she could do under the circumstances. She could not then take one side or the other.

"I suppose my daughter has told you of what has passed between us," Mrs. Sandringham began, a little lestiffly, and declining to be seated, as if she expected the interview would not be a very long one, but laying her hand on the back of the chair; "so you can scarcely be at a loss to know the object of my visit." She paused, but as Lady Elizabeth made no reply, she continued in a milder tone: "I have to thank you for taking such good care of my child when I could not be with her. You have been quite like a mother to her, for which I ought to be, and am, very grateful. Few people have been circumstanced so unhappily as I, separated from my child so long; but now that is to be at an end, and I have come to claim her from you."

This speech had not a good effect. Mild as she was, Lady Elizabeth was nettled by the "quite like a mother," and she thought it well to put down the feeling from which it had sprung at once. She did this, however, in a very gentle manner.

"Yes, Evelyn has told me," she replied, feeling a little nervous beforehand at what would be the effect of her answer, for the gaze of Mrs. Sandringham's large questioning eyes told her that they could flash rather alarmingly; "and I am sorry that I must disappoint you. It is impossible that it should be as you wish."

"Impossible that I should have my own! You cannot mean that?"

"I do indeed. Evelyn is to remain here."

"You do not consider who it is that demands her from you. When you remember that it is her own mother who is in question you will scarcely persist in this. Who can have a better right to her than I?"

"Her guardian. My son is her guardian. She was committed to his care by his father, who had received her from—Col. Dormer."

Mrs. Sandringham started at the name, and a faint blush rose in her cheeks. For the first time since she had entered the room her eyes were bent on the floor, but she raised them again very soon, and glanced hastily at Lady Elizabeth, who, however, was not scanning her face as she had expected, but looking towards Evelyn as if she would give her time to get over that slight confusion. She had seen it, and fancied she had guessed the meaning of it; but it was not the first time nor the last in which Mrs. Sandringham was misunderstood. "And we cannot give up that charge," continued Lady Elizabeth after a little pause.

"But I do not see how the fact of your son being Evelyn's guardian need interfere with my claim. He could still continue his guardianship, she living with me."

"It does in so far that he wills it. He has said that she shall remain at Manor Melleray." This was spoken with much dignity, but it must be admitted that it was very lenient, considering what a very different answer she might have given. But she could not bring herself to draw down that unpleasant subject, at least while any other loophole of escape remained to her.

"Then it is only a question between his will and mine," said Mrs. Sandringham, erecting her head haughtily. "I can scarcely think that Lady Elizabeth Levison, being a mother herself, will hesitate in deciding which should have the preference; except, indeed," she added with some bitterness, "that she may have learned to value that which is not hers, and will allow her sense of justice to be overruled by her wishes, in which case it only remains for me to learn which my daughter will obey."

"I cannot permit that an appeal be made to Evelyn," said Lady Elizabeth, in a low voice, for she was a little dismayed at the tone she had taken. "I would have sent her away at once, but that I hoped you would be content with my first answer, and spare her this. I am sorry I did not do so."

"You are very good, and it is really delightful to perceive the affection you have for my little girl. You make me quite ashamed of myself, I being her mother and you nothing to her. But I regret I cannot benefit by the lesson. I must explain to my daughter her duty, as it would seem she is ignorant of it;" she was angry that Evelyn did not go to her. "By what you have said you leave me no other course. And as to sending her away, excuse me, but

I do not think you will. Of course, I should desire her to remain, and however deficient her education has been, I do not believe she would disobey *me*."

There was a confidence and strength in her manner which swept all before it, helped, too, by an acrimony which gave a sting to every intonation of her voice, and told hard on the gentle lady unused to such harsh treatment. She could not meet the angry glances, or watch the scornful curl of her lips, with anything like courage, and lay back in her couch now at those indignant words, a faint sigh escaping her. Mrs. Sandringham saw her effect, and was going to follow it up ruthlessly; but at that moment Arthur Levison entered.

He had seen a hackney cab from the Darmeath Station at the door, and wondered who could have arrived in it, but he very soon guessed what was taking place, and he came straight to the scene of action, and, with an undaunted air, Mrs. Sandringham turned to face this new opponent.

CHAPTER XIV.

"SHE WILL TAKE THE THING SHE BEGS."

ONE glance round told him the state of affairs. He bowed to her, and with a graceful, though cold gesture, she returned the salute; both examining each other in that brief exchange of glances. He was surprised she was so different from what he had expected. Evelyn had said she was beautiful, but there was something more than beauty here. The very same thoughts which occurred to his mother, occurred to him. Could she have been the heroine of that story? the faithless wife, the heartless mother, the fallen woman; it was hard to think it, so noble and grand-looking, so ready to meet his eye, as if her life had been stainless. And then, what composure and dignity in her carriage! She had remained standing, as if she knew that she looked to the best advantage thus; and he was struck by her height—much above Evelyn's—and by the graceful, well-made, full, but not plump figure, and also by the beautiful pallor of her face, not a faded sallow paleness, but a rich creamy white in her cheeks, as well as in her forehead, over which the long black lashes showed well, when they drooped, as they did once or twice during the interview. Arthur Levison was a young man, and could admire beauty in any form, and he was considerably taken by Mrs. Sandringham's appearance; but even feeling that admiration, he would perhaps scarcely have shown her the deference he did, were it not for that expression I have spoken of more than once, and also for that something in the air and look which invariably bespeaks a lady. It would be impossible to treat her

with anything but deference. It had seemed a very easy thing until now, to confront the outcast, and deny her child to her—by the right of his guardianship to place an impassible barrier between the two; but looking into that face, and meeting those resolute, unshrinking eyes, he felt that his task would be more difficult than he had expected. It was a lady, and Evelyn's mother, against whom he would be arrayed. All those unpleasant antecedents were swept out of sight. Every chivalric instinct of a gentleman's soul was roused and alert on her behalf, and he resolved that come what may, he would utter no word which could call a blush to her cheek, or excite the haughty indignation that he saw she was very capable of. Somehow, he was gratified at finding her so very different from what he had expected. The generous supposition of Lady Elizabeth, that there might have been some extenuating circumstance in her case, rose in his mind too, but the common sense natural to a man soon disposed of that—the disgraceful story was too well-founded to admit of such a suggestion—whilst at the same time he was prepared to give to the culprit's early errors an indulgence of which few ladies would be capable. Thus he was less credulous and more merciful than his mother, although, for a woman, she had been wondrously lenient. He had been very indignant at what he had believed was her part in that business of Evelyn's disappearance; but seeing the kind of person she was, he thought no more about that, and considered only how he could best withstand what he foresaw would be a sharp attack.

On the whole, perhaps, Mrs. Sandringham was not very sorry at his entrance. It had been easy brow-beating Lady Elizabeth, but she gathered her forces, and was more resolute than ever, at sight of this more worthy antagonist. She saw the effect of her own beauty on him, and was prepared to take advantage of it, but she had no suspicion of the thoughts that were passing through his mind.

"No, thanks!" she said quietly, as he motioned for her to be seated, and seeing that she declined to sit, he remained standing too, just by his mother. He had resolved that he would send Evelyn away if he found her present, but not seeing her, for she was hidden by the hangings of the window, and made no motion, knowing instinctively who it was had entered, he concluded that his mother had done so.

"I do not need to be told that you are Mr. Levison, my daughter's guardian," said Mrs. Sandringham, fixing her expressive eyes full upon him. "I see that you know who I am—Evelyn's mother. You will surely give me a fair hearing, whatever may be your present intentions?"

He bowed silently: it was all he could do. For the life of him,

he could not cut her short with the sentence which she *must* hear, but which he felt already would be almost as hard for him to pronounce as for her to receive. The irresistible charm of her look, and voice, and air, were taking effect. He would have something to do to hold firm against her solicitations—if, indeed, she would come down off her pedestal to become his suppliant. But that was doubtful; the question had been asked as if she deemed it her right. Still, under any aspect, she was formidable—more formidable to him than to his timid mother.

“I have been for sixteen years separated from my eldest child. How that came about you have no doubt heard; if not, I cannot tell it to you. When a woman is unfortunate—not guilty—the relation of her trials is much more difficult than when they have been caused by guilt. But I am sure your father, Captain Levison, told you.”

“Yes, madam, I have heard it!” he replied, wondering how she could have the hardihood to speak of it so coolly. But what puzzled him still more was the utter absence of any attempt at brazening it out in her manner. She spoke in a low tone, and with quiet, modest dignity, as if the subject were one she would rather avoid, but, when necessary, she was prepared to treat of it as by no means reflecting shame upon herself, although causing her a certain embarrassment. And once more the question arose in his mind, “Could there have been any mistake?” She seemed farther removed than ever from the woman he had imagined. She seemed less capable than ever of doing what Evelyn’s mother had done. And once more he resolved to confine himself to barely refusing her request, and not throw *that* in her face. Whatever she was once, she was worthy of respect now—at least, she commanded his, and he would give it to her. He would treat her in all things as if the past were swept into oblivion; in all things but one—the giving up his ward to her; *that* his duty forebade him to do.

“Then, if so, you can understand how rejoiced I was to find my daughter, the little baby I had left in Calcutta, grown into a lovely girl. It was a mother’s instinct told me who she was before I even heard her name; and, once I knew her, all a mother’s love grew strong within me. I have found her, and I claim her for my own. She is my child—my own child—whom I have prayed Heaven to restore to me for years! Can any claim—can any human law stand between a mother and her child? Surely you will be just, and give her to me?”

“I regret very much to pain you,” he replied; “but it is impossible——”

“Remember what it is I ask of you,” she interrupted; “re-

member that it is her mother ! It cannot be because of my misfortunes that you would refuse. You were appointed her guardian in the room of her parents : I, her mother, now demand her from you. It will be easy for you to continue so, but for her to live with me. This is all that I ask. I am willing that she obey you, and love me ; but I cannot permit (here she glanced at Lady Elizabeth) that another should claim a daughter's duty, and enjoy my right. I have all a mother's covetousness. During all those years I have been longing for my child ; and now that I have found her, am I to be blamed if I seek to win her heart for myself ? Ah, you do not know how hard it would be for me to give her up !" This was spoken with deep pathos.

"But indeed it must be so !" said Mr. Levison, gently but firmly. "Miss Dormer cannot leave my roof, until my guardianship of her ceases, unless for that of a husband. It was from my father I received the charge, and with it certain instructions, which are entirely opposed to my granting what you ask."

"And is a dead man's wish to withhold my child from me ? Take care, Mr. Levison ! Are you playing on my weakness ? You refuse me what is every woman's right. Can it be that there is a law to sanction such thing ? Surely there must be one to protect a helpless mother ! I have heard that there is a law for the weak as well as for the strong."

"But none to help you in this matter. As Miss Dormer's guardian, I have the legal right to refuse her to you ; and in compliance with my father's injunction, I must really beg to do so."

"Had your father more claim to her obedience than I have ?"

"It is not a question of my ward's obedience : she has no choice in the matter. But as it may be a satisfaction to you, I will answer your question. He had ! He was in her father's place ; and I hold that position now. Without deferring the point to Colonel Dormer himself——"

"You surely would not expect me to defer to him ?" said she, with a curious look.

"No, madam ; I would not—I will not !" he replied, promptly ; but nevertheless he mistook her meaning ; "it would be useless ! When Colonel Dormer relinquished his little daughter to my father, he said that he gave her up for ever ; that she was not to be taught to look to him ; she was to be reared without any reference to him ; and as my father was willing to accept the trust, she, in point of fact, became his child. And now that I am filling his place, she is as much under my control as if she were my sister or my child ; and I could not think the trust more sacred than I do if she held either of those close relations to me."

"But she is my child, and she is nothing to you."

"Yes ; she is my ward ; and, more, she is—I am sorry that I must be more explicit—but Miss Dormer cannot leave my house at present, and it is hopeless to look for it."

"And this is your decision ?" said she, with an almost piteous look.

"I regret very much that I must pain you," said he courteously.

"What are words ! It is in your power to give me my child, and yet you withhold her from me. Can it be that you, a young man, a gentleman, can treat me thus ! It was quite right that you should claim Evelyn's obedience until now ; but I have a higher, a dearer claim. A mother's title is holy ! nothing should interfere with it. In comparison with that relationship, all others are nothing. God gave my child to me, it cannot be your duty to keep her from me !"

He merely shook his head. What answer could he make ? Her love was very strong, he could see, and she still hoped she could soften him. If he listened to her much longer it might be harder still than it was now to withstand that sweet, rich voice, the earnest gaze of her eyes. All through this interview he had failed to connect her in thought with "that man," Trefanin. She occupied a pedestal of her own : all the shades and spots fell away off her. She was an interesting, beautiful, unhappy woman, and, moreover, Evelyn's mother, asking a favour of him that he was bound to refuse ; and, if she persisted longer, how did he know would his firmness stand ? Perhaps she suspected this, for she did now at length descend from her pedestal, and condescend to entreat. The proud Mrs. Sandringham was appearing in the novel character of a suppliant. She opened the flood-gates of her tenderness, and deluged the young man with eager, passionate prayers, ardent, pleading words, that showed the fervour and love of the warm, womanly heart, spite of its icy covering ; and through all the torrent of eloquent appeal there ran a subtle flattery in her allusions to him, which, though less telling than her own beauty, and her own fervid, graceful language, he should yet be more than mortal to be proof against. Was it not hard for him to resist ? Remember, he was a young man, and she was scarcely more than five years older than him. She was beautiful—far more beautiful than her daughter, whom he loved ; she was very eloquent, and she was Evelyn's mother. He felt his resolution grow faint within him. How could he withstand this enchantress, who swept away his reason from him, and left him nothing to stand on but a dwindling sense of duty, which bade fair to follow his courage ? There was no danger of his being actually prevailed on to allow Evelyn to leave his home, and take up her residence with her

mother. Nothing should induce him to do that, but there was danger of her drawing some concession from him which she could make use of in turning afterwards against himself, and give her an excuse for renewing this attempt at some other time, and that would not do. He must say or do something which would finally convince her that what she wanted could not be, and do it in such a manner as not to wound her feelings; for he was more than ever impressed by the womanly dignity and grace of her demeanour, and more than ever bent on showing, by word and look, the respect he felt for her.

He did this. He spoke in a way that could leave no mistake as to his meaning. Although his manner when he had refused her before was determined enough, he had allowed the influence she had gained over him to appear too much; but now, alarmed at how far that had gone, he took pains to be as composed and as inexorable as possible to banish whatever hope she might have conceived in her mind. He seldom had to go through a more unpleasant work. He would a great deal rather be cutting down a few score of sepoys with his sabre. To withstand such a woman as that was no mean task, and to crush a tender hope out of a motherly breast was what the young man did not relish having to do. And when she saw that all her condescension and entreaties were of no avail, and that there was no changing his resolution, the look of reproach she cast on him was such that he could not stand it. Not one word did she speak, but that look spoke volumes, and, like any male coward, he could not meet it. Not that he feared a scene, or that she would let a tear drop—he already knew her too well to fear that; but her eyes had that in them which was more disquieting than a woman's weeping. He turned away, feeling that, under whatever aspect she appeared, he was scarcely a match for her. Her first proud and dignified bearing had commanded his respect; her passionate pleading had almost won him to grant her wishes; and now he could not meet her anger. It was to the window he turned—the window where Evelyn was. It was open, and she was leaning on the sill; the hangings falling about her had hidden her from view.

"*You* here, Evelyn?" he said, in surprise, and his tone told that he was not very well pleased either.

She raised her head, which was buried in her hands, and then he saw that her face was pale, and that she had been crying. Tears were standing freshly in her eyes.

"I did not intend you should hear what has just passed"—he spoke in a low tone, and came nearer to her; "but it cannot be helped now. Dry your eyes. What is the good of fretting about it? I am sorry for it myself, too, but you see nothing else could

be done. How troubled you are about it, my poor child ! I wish you were safely away out of this now," and then he stooped to pick up her cambric pocket-handkerchief, which she had dropped in her agitation, and gave it back to her with an abstracted air, for he was thinking how he could prevent any "scene" between Evelyn and her mother. What he feared was to happen, however. It was the last resource left to her—an appeal to her daughter; and Mrs. Sandringham, half dreading it herself, still resolved that she would attempt it.

"You cannot, at least, forbid my speaking to her," she said, coming straight to where they were. He was in the act of handing the snowy morsel of embroidered work back to Evelyn, and she threw a sharp glance from one to the other, but she saw the absent look on his face, and the misery of hers, and whatever suspicion had flashed through her mind, faded out of it as quickly.

"Evelyn, come here to me!" she said then, remaining at a little distance. He was directly in the way, but in such a position that his face was visible to both, and the girl could not obey without either brushing by him or greatly disarranging the window drapery. Mrs. Sandringham saw his hesitation, and knew that he was debating with himself whether he would permit this. Evelyn looked at him, too, in a questioning way, as if she would ask him to let her pass. And then he drew back, and she went to her mother.

It would be useless to repeat all that she said. Everything she could think of, and what tender, passionate entreaties—entreaties to her daughter! She heeded not his presence, nor Lady Elizabeth's. She wanted to win Evelyn, and this was her last chance. The words she used, her manner, her voice, were all very moving, and before long Evelyn was in her arms sobbing and crying on her breast. It was then Lady Elizabeth rose up, and left the room. This was too much for her. Every word went to her heart. She was very capable of putting herself in another person's position, and she could well imagine what Mrs. Sandringham was feeling as she spoke thus.

Matters were quite beyond Arthur Levison's management now. He did not well know how to interfere. To take Evelyn out of her mother's arms was scarcely a feasible thing, and what good would anything he could say do, whilst they remained in such close contact. So, in pure desperation, he withdrew to another window, leaving them together for the present. There could not be any great harm in that, except that Evelyn would be a good deal agitated. He did not think, as perhaps his mother might, that she would suffer contamination from contact with her mother. What he saw in her impelled him to a contrary idea, in spite of what he was compelled to believe had been the depravity of her

early life. And whilst there he thought over all that had just happened, and said to himself that it was a pity to have to thwart her so, and that she was an uncommonly fine woman. If she hadn't made such a mistake years ago, and gone off with that half-caste fellow, things would have come square enough, and it would be pleasant to have her *l'amie de la maison*. But as it was there was no help for it but to keep her and Evelyn separated, although now that he had met her, there did not seem so much necessity for that as before. Whatever she may have been, she did not look now like one who would be an unfit companion for any young girl, however pure and innocent, and he wished that "the affair," as he called it, had not been of quite so desperate a character, calling for such rigorous measures as he had been obliged to take.

"Well, it was over now; and all he had to do was to get rid of her as quietly as possible, and soon the little girl," here a tender smile curled his mustachioed mouth—"would learn to forget all about it, and be as happy as ever."

At this point he felt a trembling hand laid on his arm.

"Oh, if you could do anything!" said Evelyn, pale and tearful; "she is unhappy, and she says she cannot live without me."

"How did she live without you until now?" he was going to say, a little indignant at finding that she had worked on her mind in this way; but he checked himself, and took hold of the cold little hand, and held it between both his own warm palms, stroking it softly. "This will not do; you must go away now. Find out Lady Elizabeth, and let you two comfort each other."

"But what am I to say to my mother?"

"Nothing. I told you before how it must be. You do not forget your promise?"

"No. But it is so hard on her, and I know if I might only go with her for a little while, now that she has lost my brother, she will be unhappy if she must not have me, and I could return afterwards, when—"

"No, Evelyn, it cannot be; it is out of the question. She has no claim on you, and I should be greatly remiss in my duty by permitting it. Believe me, I could not hold so firm in this matter if I did not think I was in the right;" then he was leading her towards the door, but Mrs. Sandringham's voice arrested them.

"Evelyn," said she, in an unnaturally calm voice, "I shall return to London now. Am I to go alone?"

"Oh, mother!"

"Yes, I, your mother, ask you; will you stay here, to do the will of strangers, or come home with me? Can you hesitate to decide between them and me? Oh, do not make me regret that I have

found my child! Can it be that you do not love me, or surely you would fly to my arms and not cause me a moment's suspense! I have three children, and yet I have not one. My poor boy alone loved me, and I have lost him. You, Evelyn, belong to strangers; you will avenge that early desertion, which, God knows, was not done of my own free will. Answer me," she added, in an imperious tone, from which all tenderness was banished, "is it to be so? This is the last time I will ever ask you. Will you bid your mother go away childless? If you cast me off, I will cast you off. We will become strangers once more. Gracious heavens, that I should have to say this to my own child!"

After such an address it was not to be wondered at that the poor girl was completely subdued. She thought of nothing but to regain her love at all costs. She did not care that her guardian was standing by, or that she had given him a certain promise. What did it matter, in comparison to the misfortune of having her mother say such things to her? She snatched her hand away, for he still held it, and put out her two arms to her mother, with a blanched face, and streaming eyes, and cried in a tone of piteous bewailing—

"O, mother! mother! have pity on me! I will do whatever you wish! Oh, do not say such things, they will kill me!" and then she buried her face in her hands, and sobbed convulsively.

Mrs. Sandringham turned slightly away, her face losing its proud rigour, and becoming overspread with a dark miserable expression. She knew that she had gone too far, in her desperate struggle, but although she pitied her, she was very angry with Evelyn. It was too bad that she should cling to strangers instead of standing by her mother.

Mr. Levison looked very black, but he was not angry with his poor ward. How could he be angry with her? Was not she hardly tried? But now he would no longer have any mercy for her who had brought her to this? She was bent on winning Evelyn in spite of him, but he would defeat her. He was more than ever resolved that she should not have her way. He had respected and pitied her, and had been too lenient with her. He regretted that he had not taken more resolute steps to prevent this happening. He might have known that when it came to the point, Evelyn would not have the courage to oppose her mother. But, at least, he would put an end to the scene at once; it was a great mistake to have allowed it to go so far.

"I cannot permit my ward to remain here any longer," he said, looking at her mother. "She has no choice in this matter. Whatever she may say, she is still under my control; and as I hold to my resolution, this cruel appeal has had no other effect than to make her unhappy. Evelyn, let me recommend you to go to your room."

"Oh, how can I leave her?" she whispered, looking up piteously into his face, as if she would intercede with him for the motionless woman, who seemed to be turning to stone, for she spoke no word nor made no sign. "Oh, how can I leave her? she will be so unhappy! Do not be so hard on her! Let me go with her for a little while!"

"No!" said he, almost sternly, and he pointed to the door. She saw that there was no changing of him, and a feeling of indignation was strong within her. It was cruel to treat her poor mother thus, and she so desolate. At least she would not go without bidding her good-bye, and she would say something to comfort her in this great sorrow of hers. With a faint little cry she flung herself on her breast, and kissed her passionately, vehemently. But the embrace elicited no return. She endured it, neither looking at her nor shaking her off.

"Oh mother, do not look so cold! What can I do? Oh, kiss me, dear, darling mother, and say that you are not angry with me! I will never forget you, whatever happens. Alas! she will never speak to me any more! She has cast me off—what shall I do? I wish I were dead!"

And then she fell back, limp, and cold, and faint, repelled from that inexorable bosom, and would have fallen had not her guardian caught her. He gathered her up into his arms, poor little stricken deer—and holding her securely clasped in them, carried her into the adjoining room, where Lady Elizabeth waited nervously and anxiously for the result. Mrs. Sandringham's eyes followed him as he bore her away, but she did not stir or seek to detain her this time. It was all over, and she was to go away childless as she had said. Those people were stronger than she, and they had learned to value her child, and would not relinquish her. She was necessary to this Lady Elizabeth, who was an invalid, and her son was resolved she should have her. Oh, it was too bad, it was too bad! and she was powerless. Nothing remained for her to do but to submit, and go away. She was poor, and without friends, and her child belonged to others more than to her, and her life was to continue desolate unto the end. —Even if they consented, Evelyn's thoughts would be with them more than with her, and, perhaps, she was suffering less now than she would if she were to find that she was pining for those friends living with her mother. *That* would be intolerable.

Arthur returned to the room. He had brought Evelyn to Lady Elizabeth. She had not fainted, although the repulse gave her a great shock—it was a repulse or worse, that cold endurance of her embrace was crueller than if she had shaken her off at once—and she fell, his arms about her, and knew that he was carrying her away, and that it was all over. And when he put her down

beside his mother, and stooped over her to see was she conscious—for she had been so still in his arms, he thought she had really fainted—she turned away her face from him, and buried it in the cushions of the sofa, and then Lady Elizabeth signified to him to leave her to her care. So he went back to the other room where Mrs. Sandringham was. This was one that must not be neglected; but there was nothing more to be said between them. She was already moving towards the door, and waved her hand coldly as he was about to speak. She would not hear any more from him, and, indeed, what could he say that would not be a waste of words? He had gained his point, and she was to go away, perhaps not altogether broken-hearted, as she had said to Evelyn, but very, very miserable. A veil of frigid, impassable reserve had fallen upon her. Her eyes—for they met his once when he was in the act of opening the door for her—had a cold, steely glitter, but her features were white and immovable, and the small expressive mouth seemed to be hermetically sealed. Although this was no resignation, he could not but admire the way in which she carried herself now that that last effort had failed. There was so much dignity and grace in it, but everything that Mrs. Sandringham did had much grace. He knew that she was very angry with him, and he was sorry for that; it would be much pleasanter to be in her favour. To be loved by such a woman would be worth a man's while striving for. The ardent heart, the haughty spirit, the womanly tenderness, the cold queenly manner, all blended in one beautiful woman, gave her a rare charm. And the great pity he felt for her—which he knew well she would not accept; she did not want his sympathy—made him long intensely to be able to do something to bring a smile upon that small, firm, inflexible mouth; but she would never forgive him the part he had acted. He wished it had not been necessary for him to act such a part. Perhaps if she made the attempt, even then she might have drawn at least some concession from him. She had not asked for anything but the one; she would have her child altogether given up to herself, or she would have nothing, but if she had requested some less concession, it is possible that it would have been yielded to her: for Arthur Levison was by no means pleased that she should leave his house in that spirit. As he conducted her downstairs and handed her into the hired vehicle, he was thinking was there anything he could say or do to take off the edge of her indignation, and prevent her from feeling towards him afterwards as she was then. But she only bowed proudly in answer to a few words that he murmured, expressive of his deep regret for what had passed, and his hope that she would forgive the part he had taken, it being his duty, &c., and begging earnestly that she would command his services in any way in which he could

be of use to her. Her look said, "There was only one favour I wanted of you, and you refused it ; henceforth we cannot be friends."

And yet he would give much to win Mrs. Sandringham's friendship. "I wish she hadn't been so deucedly angry," he said to himself, as he went to his library. "I never met a woman I admired more. She fancies it's all over between us, but I'll not lose sight of her altogether. Some day, when this is blown over a little, and she's cooler, I'll call in that place : by Jove, I forget the name—it's a confounded hole : I must ask Evelyn. I'd give something to bring a kindly look out of that proud, handsome face ; and if I don't greatly mistake, I'll draw it from her yet !"

CHAPTER XV.

THE CAUSE IS IN DANGER.

MRS. ROTHESAY came from London for the ball, but her friend could not accompany her, as her father-in-law had just died. All the Sherbruce people were there, and, in fact, all the notabilities of the county. Lady Elizabeth, anxious that her pet should look well, had ordered a nice dress for her from a fashionable London milliner. It was of some soft, white, gossamer material, trimmed with rich white lace, but not much of it, and with two or three flowers also of white, with delicate green leaves, arranged about the skirt and body. Her arms, neck, and shoulders were as snowy as the dress ; and as the low body fitted tightly, and there were no furbelows about it, she had quite a fairy appearance, her light brown hair drawn back off her ears, and fastened in a bow at the back, and a wreath of leaves coming low on her forehead. Nothing could surpass the delicate purity and loveliness of her appearance—so fair, and young, and innocent. The effect of that parting with her mother was apparent in a pensive expression which, though not usual to it, harmonised with the Madonna-like style of her face. During the time that intervened, she had not been able to think of anything but of her, and it was almost unwillingly she prepared for the ball, for it seemed scarcely right to go into pleasure, knowing how unhappy she must be. But well she knew that Lady Elizabeth and her guardian would not consent to her absenting herself ; so she did not propose it, but she resolved that, if possible, she would abstain from dancing, as a token of respect to her mother's grief ; and circumstances helped her to carry out this childish project to a certain extent, for they did not enter the ball-room until late, and Lady Elizabeth would retire comparatively early, and Evelyn would not think of staying after her.

The rooms were full, and, in pity to her nervousness, Lady Elizabeth selected a quiet spot in the smallest of the three. It was Evelyn's first ball, and had been looked forward to with great delight, but that delight was now considerably dashed by the recollection of what her mother had suffered, and must be suffering; and it was with anything but joyful anticipations that she looked about her at the brilliant sight. She would rather be at her mother's side than there amongst all those gay people; and she wished that she had been allowed to stay away, at least that she might think of her when she could not be with her. And under the influence of these thoughts, she refused to dance once or twice when she was asked, and, seeing that she disliked the thought of dancing, Lady Elizabeth made excuses for her.

But when they had been there some time, this sombre mood gradually melted away. She became interested in watching the others, and asked innumerable questions, which her kind friend was very glad to answer; for she was thankful to see that her attention was attracted, and that the shadow was disappearing from her face. And soon they became quite merry there together, talking about everybody—who was this, and who was that, who looked well, and who didn't. Miss Challis came once into the room where they were, and both agreed that she was magnificent. Her dress was a sort of half-mourning, and was blazing in diamonds and jet, over which the statuesque shoulders, and throat, and silvery hair had an almost startling effect; and her eyes seemed to be green and gold at night, and were very effective in their glances. She glanced over carelessly at them, then gave Evelyn a prolonged stare, and passed, leaning on the arm of an officer in the Coldstream Guards.

"How handsome she looks!" cried Evelyn, in admiration. "I do think she is the nicest here."

"No, here comes one whom I prefer greatly," said Lady Elizabeth, welcoming with a smile a young lady with a blonde complexion, and bright eyes, and a genial, pleasant expression, in a blue diaphanous cloud, who flew towards them at once, before Evelyn had time to retract that opinion, which she was very ready to do, for, like her companion, she considered Miss Challis far inferior, in every way, to Lady Jennie Thalberg.

And now what talk, and what jesting, and what laughter! Jennie brought sunshine everywhere with her. She was a general favourite. There came some dowagers presently, and gathered about Lady Elizabeth, and the two girls moved away a little to have an undisturbed talk. Evelyn was all animation now; every shade had disappeared, and she chatted away merrily to her companion, thinking she could not enjoy herself near as much if she were dancing.

"Haven't you danced yet?" said Jennie to her.

"No, but this is better; don't you like looking on?"

"Yes, well enough, but to say truth, I'd rather be dancing. I love dancing. I don't know what I shall do when I get old, and shall have no partners. And as to looking on, it's very well for you who haven't, I may say, come out yet; but, you see, it wouldn't do so well for me. Do you know what my Aunt Fernhurst says? 'Always be sure to have plenty of partners, Jennie. Don't have the girls sweeping their dresses past you, and saying to their partners, "What a pity poor Lady Jennie!—her not dancing, I mean; and she's really a nice girl!"' " as if one could ask the men to dance with one! But if I wouldn't ask them for myself, I think I'll do it for you, Evelyn. You must really dance. Charles is not here, or, of course, he would.

"But I don't want to dance—I would rather not," said Evelyn.

"I like staying here talking to you; but I suppose you'll be taken away immediately—and, oh dear! I believe that is going to be now. This gentleman looks like a partner, I imagine."

"Let me see, I do think—yes, I have promised him the next waltz. Now, Evelyn, I know not when you and I shall meet again—I mean, during this night;" then the gentleman came up to claim her hand, and took her away with him, and left alone, Evelyn began to feel it strange, sitting there on the ottoman with a couple of ancient dames at one side, their backs to her, and eagerly talking with a clique of dowagers about Lady Elizabeth; the other side, which Jennie had occupied, vacant; and spreading her dress over that, and idly toying with her bouquet, she gave herself up to thinking of her mother. What was she doing then? was she thinking of her, and was it possible they were not to meet any more? That was a hard sentence. How gay all those people seemed! Had they ever known sorrow? It seemed impossible. What a different fate was her mother's, lonely, desolate, heart-broken! "Oh, dear! if she could only have me, I know it would make her happy; but she is not to have me, the one thing in all the world that she'd care to get is refused to her. But I suppose they are right, and that they shouldn't consent when they think it wrong; but, perhaps—oh, I believe that she is better than what they think, that there is some mistake, and this, my being refused to her, is harder on her than what she deserves. Lady Elizabeth says that my guardian thinks better of her than he used, and that he will perhaps call to see her before long; and I am so glad, it is so good of him; then I shall hear how she is, and shall send her my love; and, perhaps, they would let me go to see her after some time. Lady Elizabeth and I could go, and I know she would be pleased, though she may not think now that she would like it."

Then her thoughts drifted away to Lia, and to the unknown brother of whom she had heard her mother speak, and she was deep in speculation about him—what was he like? and should she ever meet him? and various other unanswerable questions, and she did not know how long she had sat there thinking these things, when she was roused out of her reverie by the voice of her guardian speaking to her. She started in a confused way, as people do when roused out of deep thought—they know that they have been addressed, but have not caught what was said.

“I beg your pardon! I didn’t hear,” said Evelyn, colouring at her own stupidity.

“So I perceive, but it was hard for you with this incessant chatter,” looking towards the group of dowagers. “I was asking you to dance.”

“I would rather not,” said she, looking down, for she was not prepared with a reason.

“And why not?—nervous, eh?”

“Yes, partly!”

“Well, I can wait, and help you to screw up your courage. Being your first ball, it is not, I suppose, to be wondered at,” and then he coolly removed her dress, and took the place that Lady Jennie had occupied, so that the conversation going on in their neighbourhood would not interfere with theirs.

Now it happened that an hour or so before the ball opened he had sent her a case containing a necklace and earrings of magnificent pear pearls, which, having consulted Lady Elizabeth, she wore, and it occurred to her that she ought to thank him for them now. But before she attempted to do so he was saying—

“You were in a deep reverie just now—what was it about?”

“I was thinking of—of my mother.”

“I am very glad I broke on your thoughts, then. They were not calculated to make you very cheerful. If you would listen to Lady Snowland speaking, it would be a great deal more diverting.”

“Oh, I heard her.”

“And what do you think? Is not she very funny. Did you hear the story of the general and his servant? or the famous one about the Bengal tiger? There never *was* such a man as the general for killing tigers.”

“Did you ever kill one?” asked Evelyn, with sudden animation.

“Well—I believe so. I took part in a good many hunts, at least.”

“Oh, how could you like it? It is so dreadfully dangerous! but, I suppose, it is that makes it attractive.”

“Like it! it is the best sport I ever enjoyed, and it’s not such a

dreadful business either. To be sure you'd want to keep a sharp look-out, and to have a good nerve and steady hand"—("and you had all these," said Evelyn to herself, throwing him a furtive glance of admiration)—"I have known fellows, stout enough in the field, to be rather awed by the eye of a tiger. You see the beast has a vicious look, especially when crouching for the spring, and it's not pleasant to know that you may have it's claws sticking in you the next minute. But how did we come to be talking of tigers? Ah, Lady Snowlands! Her husband was in India when I was there. A fine old fellow, not half such an ass as she would make him out to be."

"There is Miss Challis," said Evelyn, pointing her out at some distance. "How well she is looking!"

"Yes! Do you like her?"

"She is very handsome."

"That is scarcely an answer to my question; but I suppose I must accept it. If you did like her you would have said so at once, and you would not care to say the reverse; so I will not urge you."

"But I had no inclination to say the reverse," replied Evelyn, briskly. "I don't know Miss Challis well enough to know whether I could like her or not; but I certainly do not dislike her. She is looking in this direction now. I think she wants you, Mr. Levi-son."

"What makes you think so?" said he, without stirring. "Or is it because you want to get rid of me?"

"Oh, no!" A more vehement protest was on her lips, but she checked it, and that caused her to speak those two little monosyllables in a low tone, which gave them more significance than if she had pronounced an elegant little speech, calculated to convince him that she could not have such an intention.

"You are always sending me away to her from your own side," he continued, almost in a whisper. "Is it that you think it is my duty to be always with her? If so, my duty does not pull with my inclination."

"I think she likes it," replied Evelyn, bluntly, too much confused by his manner, and by her consciousness that Miss Challis's eye was still on her, to be able to make a better answer; "and really," she added, laughingly, throwing off her confusion by an effort, "I must send you away. I can see that Miss Challis expects you to go to dance with her. I suppose she has your name down for this waltz?"

"Upon my honour, no. I am not engaged to her for it. I will dance it with somebody else, or not at all," said he, standing up. "Will you favour me?"

"I did not intend to dance," said she, timidly. She knew he would not be satisfied with that, and she was not prepared to tell him the real reason, for it struck her now as being a little silly. To come into a ball-room with the intention of sitting still all night, because her mother had been disappointed in a certain hope a couple of days before, was a design which would be sure to receive scant mercy at his hands.

"And why not? The first dance must be made sometime, and with whom better than your guardian?"

"Perhaps I would by-and-bye."

He laughed.

"I heard something from my mother about your leaving the room with her, but I mean to quarrel with that arrangement," and then he let her see pretty plainly that he would not be put off. "You know we have never danced together," he said, and she stood up and put her arm into his, to be conducted into the other room, where the dancing was, feeling that first resolution grow very weak indeed between the combined force of his persuasion and her own desire not to appear affected; and once she had thrown that over, the natural instincts of a young lady spoke the desire to be amongst the others, and dancing to that grand music; and chiefly, perhaps, her own thoughts, which had been somewhat sad, allowed her eyes to brighten, and her step to become buoyant. Miss Challis had, at length, disappeared, and that fact, too, gave her some courage, for she guessed instinctively that she would not like to see her dancing with Mr. Levison, any more than talking to him, and she had no desire to draw the angry glitter of those green eyes on herself.

The band had just commenced a waltz, and various couples were already whirling round the round.

In one of the breathing pauses, they stopped near a doorway. Evelyn was quite out of breath, her face flushed, her bosom heaving, and her eyes sparkled brightly. All thought of her mother had vanished; she was amused, delighted, and thoroughly enjoying herself. Dancing at Mrs. Cunningham's with a dowdy girl, in an ill-lit room, and to the tune of an old jingling piano, was a very different business from this, her first waltz in a spacious ball-room, ablaze with lights, in the midst of well-dressed people, and to the perfect measure of a first-class band, with such a partner as Arthur Levison.

"You waltz to perfection!" said he, admiringly; "I never enjoyed a dance more. I cannot conceive how you managed to get such good practice in that place."

"We used to dance in the winter nights," she replied, still a good deal fluttered—"all the girls together, and it was great fun.

And when there would be a collision, we'd have such screams of laughter, but Mrs. Cunningham didn't like that; it wasn't lady-like, she said."

"She was a female martinet, I suspect."

"She wasn't in the least strict, if that is what you mean; but she didn't like waltzing; she said the less a girl had of it the better. It is a vain and frivolous amusement, dancing is."

"Is that your opinion, or Mrs. Cunningham's?"

"Mrs. Cunningham's."

"I question if she were young, and in a ball-room, would she adhere to it. As Portia says, 'It is a good divine that follows his own instructions,' and 'the brain may devise laws for the blood, but a hot temper leaps o'er a cold decree; such a hare is madness the youth, to skip o'er the meshes of good council the cripple.' Now, I am sure you would not endorse the schoolmistress's opinion?"

"No indeed! I liked it very well!"

"Just now?"

"Yes."

"Suppose we resume?" said he.

"I think it is Lady Elizabeth's hour to go, and I should not like to remain after her. Yes, I see her now, leaning on Mr. Rothesay. Please let us go to her," said Evelyn.

"Retire with my mother? that is nonsense; you must dance oftener than once, at least. My mother is coming this way; I will tell her that you are not going yet;" and then he drew Evelyn's arm into his, and led her to meet the other two; for he had seen that they were bent for his direction.

Now, Lady Elizabeth had seen him approach Evelyn, and had not approved thereof, especially when he took her aside; but surrounded as she was then, she was obliged to content herself with watching the play of his features and the droop of the girl's lids; and when she saw how he overruled her timorous objections, and induced her to dance, she had not the courage to interfere, for it was plain that he was bent upon it. But she resolved that she would not leave Evelyn behind her in the ball-room, to have Arthur hovering about her, and drawing the notice of others on them; worse still to have the mind of her poor little favourite once more in a tumult; and with this object she asked Mr. Rothesay to have a look out for her son, and bring her to him. But Lady Elizabeth was careful not to let her play appear, or allow him to suspect that she had any particular object in preventing Evelyn dancing with him. Her kindly heart was pleased to see the bright eyes and beaming smiles that lit up Evelyn's face, and it was almost with a feeling of regret that she was about to interfere in her pleasure; for those symptoms

were far more welcome to her sight than the drooping head and languid steps which had been the rule since that parting with her mother. But even a return to that would be preferable to the state of things that would be sure to result from half-a-dozen dances with Arthur, with whispered conversations in the intervals, out on lobbies or in deep-bayed windows, and the eyes of half the room fixed curiously on them, Miss Challis's jealous green orbs into the bargain; and direst calamity of all, perhaps, for him to find out in that seductive intercourse that the society of the ward was "indispensable to his happiness," as the phrase goes. That would never do! It would be better that the young girl should continue to think sorrowfully of her mother, than lose her very soul to her guardian, and it had nearly gone to that already. She must keep them asunder. However it was managed, she must prevent their meeting so often. Letitia's plan having already failed, it remained to devise another, and as a preliminary step, the mischief likely to result from a night's flirtation must be provided against.

"She was so *triste*," said Lady Elizabeth, diplomatically; "it was very good of you, Arthur, to take her to dance. She has brightened up amazingly. But now I think my little linnet has had quite enough, and will go to roost. She is not used to a whole night's dancing, like all the others."

"But Evelyn has hardly danced at all yet, mother, except one waltz, and not the whole of that. She must really favour me again. And there is Charles Thalberg; has just entered the room; where can he have been? he will certainly expect to dance with her too."

"We arranged that she should retire with me," rejoined his mother, as usual losing her courage at once, when at issue on any subject with him.

"Why should she do that? There is no reason that I can see. Nothing is to happen to her here."

"No, but she would feel it odd if left alone; and I do not think Letitia is prepared to chaperon her——"

"I am sure Mrs. Rothesay would be very happy," began blundering Mr. Rothesay, too eager to answer for his wife to remember that he ought not put in a word against Lady Elizabeth, who was, in effect, working for his interests. However little inclined Mrs. Rothesay might be to burden herself with a timid young lady at her first ball, it is probable she would be still less disposed to undertake that task if she knew that she would thereby enable Arthur to gratify himself with his ward's society at short intervals.

"What nonsense!" cried the young man, a little impatiently. "I'll take care of Evelyn, mother, never fear," he said; then, by

way of apology for thus qualifying her design, "and will bring her to your quarters in an hour or so."

She had seen with his first answer that in this matter she must yield to him; and although the prospect of his "taking care of Evelyn" was by no means pleasing to her, she did give way now, fearing that he would be angry, and perhaps suspect that she had some design, if she pushed it any farther. But it was with much misgiving that she yielded, resolving that at least, after this night, something must be done. What that something was to be it would be difficult to settle.

About an hour after that, Evelyn was standing in a window—one of many—in a long, brilliantly-lighted gallery, through which a couple of people would pass now and then; but at the present moment there was no one there but herself and Arthur Levison. Since Lady Elizabeth had left the ball-room, she had danced twice with him, and once with Lord Thalberg; and people who had eyes, and knew how to make use of them—and in such a place the majority are so endowed—had begun to say that Miss Challis would have to look sharp, or that little girl would cut her out. And Miss Challis herself had used her eyes, as well as other people, and had then allowed an ugly frown to contract her white temples. But a frown is very perceptible on a lady's face, especially in a ball-room, where smiles, however hackneyed, are more generally expected; so it disappeared; but the venomous glitter that had shot from her eyes remained, and took up a permanent habitation therein. And when she encountered Mrs. Rothesay, *she* also looking a little uncomfortable, they, two, had some talk together concerning the black look of affairs, and the question as to how, or in what manner that sly, designing girl should be put down, so that she might never rise again; and also whether it was still possible to break this unmanageable colt they had in hands into harness. Not that they, by any means, thought that things were gone too far, but it was so vexatious to have people remarking his neglect, and there was half the night gone, and Miss Challis had only danced with him once, whilst he had danced twice with Miss Dormer. This was too bad for a lady almost engaged to be married to him; and Sydney, speaking of it to her friend, repeated that threat she had made use of formerly, that it would be very easy for her to bring back Lord Crawley, if she liked, and that she would not certainly endure to be thrown over in this way. It was a kind of moral spur by which she fagged on Letitia's efforts against the enemy, and it served now as it had served before; for, cool and supremely indifferent as to the affairs of others, Letitia allowed herself to be flurried, and anxious, and humble enough where her own interests were concerned, and especially where there was the question of adding a few thousands yearly to her husband's income.

But my business is not at present with Mrs. Rothesay, or Miss Challis, but with those two in the gallery. The light fell full on Evelyn's face as she stood there, and showed her flushed, radiant, bright-eyed. Part of her white dress flowed over the cushioned seat that ran round the window, for she had, in fact, knelt upon it at first, to look out at the starry sky and the deep shadows in the park, and had then left that position to answer some question of her companion's, turning round, and facing him, and so coming into the light. She had avoided it, for she knew that her eyes had an unusual light in them—that she was looking too bright, too happy; and she allowed her eyes to fall to the ground now, for his had a perplexing knack of seeking them on the slightest provocation.

"I am so thankful for these," said Evelyn, at last finding an opportunity to allude to the present, and pointing to the necklace with great simplicity, as it hung round her neck, thus unconsciously drawing attention to its snowy resting-place. "Lady Elizabeth said I ought to wear them."

"Of course! Why shouldn't you?"

"They are so grand, and, on me, I fancy they are quite lost."

He was about to utter some flattering contradiction to this, but seeing that the idea of seeking a compliment was very far from her thoughts, he checked himself, and said, quietly—

"I do not see that. It strikes me that they suit you uncommonly well. I do not like to see pearls on some people: they are not in keeping with their style. But I guessed that they would suit you, and I find that I was right."

"I never thought I should be wearing pearls," said Evelyn, candidly.

"Why so, pray?"

"Oh! you know. I—I knew——" and here she stopped.

"Well, why did you think that?"

"When I was at Mrs. Cunningham's, I used to be thinking about myself—who I was, you know—I mean I didn't know who were my parents; and I used to wonder why it was that I didn't live with my father and mother, like other girls, before I went to the school, but with Lady Elizabeth, and wondering at all that—you know girls are dreadful for it."

"Dreadful for what? I never knew confusion to be delightful before."

She pondered, dropping her head on one side; then something of his meaning dawned on her, and she looked up with a flash of saucy defiance.

"I won't say any more, if you are going to laugh at me."

"I am not going to laugh at you. I will be the most attentive listener that ever was."

"Oh! indeed it's not worth listening to, and I think I'll go to

bed now. It was only that I fancied that I wouldn't be entitled, as it were, to wear pearls, because it's only very grand people who wear them, and such as these especially. I am sure Mrs. Cunningham never thought a pupil of hers would have the like. They are very beautiful!"

"Yes, so I see now."

He was not thinking of the pearls, but of the person they adorned; and catching the peculiar tone of his voice, she coloured and turned slightly away; and it occurred to her for the first time that she had said quite enough about the pearls.

"It is ever so late, I suppose," said she, with an affectation of carelessness; "and really, Mr. Levison, you should return to the ball-room. I will go to my room now, please."

"Why are you in such a hurry to leave?" said he. "You are resolved I shall see as little of you as possible. Are you afraid Miss Challis will be jealous? or is it that you don't like to be with me? Confess, now; which is it, you bewitching little woman?"

"Neither, sir," said Evelyn, playfully, for with a flash of intuition she knew what was at stake now, and resolved to act in such a manner as she knew would be most pleasing to Lady Elizabeth. She must not allow herself to yield to the seductive pleasure she felt at his words, or let him see that she was affected by them. It was with an effort that she spoke thus, but the effort brought success; "it is simply that I choose to go, and I suppose you won't keep me against my will. Indeed, I must insist that you let me pass. You will have to return to the ball-room then when you will have no one to speak to;" and then she laughed a soft girlish laugh involuntarily, and perhaps a little unwisely too.

"There will be you," said he, smiling.

"Oh, no; I am going away, please."

"You don't look sleepy. Those eyes are as bright as ever."

"I don't think my eyes have anything to do with it," said Evelyn, demurely.

"Upon my word, they have; a deuced deal! I wish I might look into them now and read what I want to know." Then he bent his head as he continued: "Why did I ever look into them when—— why am I your guardian? It's a dangerous relationship, little girl. That day that I went to Mrs. Cunningham's was a day in my life."

But she looked steadfastly on the floor, and made no answer, her colour, however, coming and going rather tellingly.

"Witch! you are resolved I shall not taste of the forbidden fruit any longer. And why forbidden? What's to prevent me?—you shall answer me this at least. I want to speak to you about that—that confounded will. I suppose they told it to you."

"Yes, I heard it."

"Well, what do you think? I mean," he added, seeing that she looked puzzled, "whether I ought to submit to be snared or not?"

"I do not understand. Is it that you would ask me whether you ought to marry Miss Challis?"

"Yes. Stay, Evelyn! I do not know that it would be well to tell you how much depends on your answer. I suppose I ought not, but there is a strong temptation."

He had yielded to temptation before on that night. He knew he was not doing right in dancing so much with her, but he had still gone one. And now he was watching the fair girlish face closely, searchingly, but he learned nothing in it. Her eyes were downcast. She had no suspicion of what those last words of his meant; that is, she did not arrive at the conclusion that they referred to her; but his steady gaze, and something in the tone of his voice, caused her a certain nervousness, and she kept a guard over herself, fearing this would appear. It was well for the Challis-Rothsay interest that she did so, for any little encouragement on her part would probably have drawn words from him which it would be difficult to induce him to retract or pass over.

"Suppose I did not love Miss Challis, and that I loved somebody else, ought I to marry her?" he continued after a pause, and having failed to learn anything in her face.

"Indeed I think so," she replied; "does not the will——"

"I know what you would say. I forget continually the conditions, and that it would make her an absolute beggar if I refused to comply. But it is very hard, Evelyn. I love that other person with my whole soul; if I knew of her caring about me, I don't know what madness I might not be tempted to. It is all very well to be conscientious and just, and all that; but when there is such an one as ——" he suppressed the "you," reckless as he was at the moment he hesitated about disturbing her mind, when no good could be gained by it. "How will you like it—how will you like your guardian being married? Will you tell him all your thoughts, and be as free, and brave with him as hitherto? I should not like that it would make any change between us."

"What change could it make?" said she, but with a strange sinking of her heart. She understood now all that he had been saying, and that it was her he loved; and remembering what Lady Elizabeth had told her about the necessity of his marrying Miss Challis, and how much she wished it, she resolved to be doubly cautious over herself—not to let him see that as he loved her, she loved him; for, simple as she was, she guessed that it would do mischief. "What change could it make, except that Lady Eliza-

beth says you will not live so much at Manor Melleray as before ; but you will come to see her often, I know, and then we can tell you all that has been happening to us, so that it will be nearly the same."

"The same ! Oh, no, indeed ! not the same. It *must* not be so ; and it was folly, what I was talking just now, about its making no change between us. I must not listen to your innocent talk, my pet, or come here looking on your face ; that would never do. All this which has been between us must cease. You will be sorry for that ?"

She turned hastily away, and looked out of the window. He came up to her side, and before she knew what he was doing, he had passed his arm round her, and drawn her close up to himself.

"Answer me that !" he said, in a low, deep tone—"will you be sorry for it ? Look up at me, Evelyn ! I want to meet your eyes when you are answering me."

"You should not do this, Mr. Levison." She did look up ; but it was reproach he saw in them ; then her eyes fell, and tears trembled on the lashes. He released her at once.

"You are right !—I forgot myself. I beg your pardon, dear child ! But if you knew all, you would not be angry with me. Are you very angry with me ?"

"No !" spoken almost in a whisper ; but she gave him her hand frankly. He took it, pressed it, then drew off the glove, retaining the hand he had bared still in his grasp.

"What would you do with my glove, Mr. Levison ?" asked Evelyn, *naïvely*.

"Nothing. But I may keep it, may I not ?"

"I suppose you will, if you wish it," said she, with an arch smile ; "but I think I shall claim my property if you do not let go my hand ! Thank you ! And now I will wish you good night." And with a bashful little curtsy, without raising her eyes, she tripped past him, and flitted away down the gallery. He had made a motion as if he would stop her, but as she eluded him he did not call her back, and remained standing in the same spot, the little glove in his hand. As a true historian, I must record that he raised this same little glove to his lips before putting it in the breast-pocket of his coat.

"It is all folly—mad folly ! and she is as much beyond my reach as if she were one of the Hyades. I must meet the thing like a man : give her up, marry Miss Challis, and submit to be enriched against my will. It is not many would object to that ; and I dare say, when it's all over, and I have overcome this (if I ever do overcome it), I shall be glad I didn't let it blind me to the right. And yet—and yet—I had enough, more than enough ! I

am not covetous, nor ambitious; and if I only knew that my little darling loved me, I do believe I would be willing to give half my fortune as well as that, to be able to make her my wife."

There are men—stern, astute, unromantic, worldly-minded men—who have known moments in their lives when they could have uttered such a sentiment as that—ay, and without blushing at their sentimentality, too!

ST. JAMES'S

ST. JAMES'S has been a word of power as long as any living man can remember, and much longer in the memory of history. Versailles has not been more famous for its comedies of the ante-chamber and back-stairs, nor the Vatican for its political and social significance, than St. James's for both. The Court of St. James's, at any time these hundred and fifty years, has wielded an influence, more or less direct, over the domestic life of palaces and the deliberations of cabinets. The authority, "Given at our Court of St. James's," is acknowledged in remoter corners of the globe, and over a wider surface, and by infinitely larger masses of subjects, than that of any sovereignty that has ever existed. We who live under the shadow of the old palace that has housed so many of our kings and queens, and where most of our state ceremonials are still enacted, ought to know something about the local traditions. But who does? Who knows when the palace was built, or who built? or, looking back into the hazy ages when King Lud kept the western gate of the city, and not a solitary roof rose upon the intervening space between that point and the distant hermitage of St. Katherine, at Charing—who can tell us to what uses the site of the Palace and the area of the park were then dedicated? We fear that, of the multitudes who pass and re-pass the old clock-tower and gateway every hour in the day, few can resolve any of these questions. Things that lie close at hand are the last looked into. We can investigate them at any moment, and therefore never investigate them at all. The whole anecdote-history of Fontainebleau or St. Cloud is much more likely to be familiar to the club-lounger in St. James's-street than the slenderest item of gossip connected with the locality in which he spends half his life. Yet every step he takes in this neighbourhood is upon "storied ground." It is not, however, with the traditions of the surrounding district that we intend to occupy ourselves at present, whatever we may do hereafter. Of all the structures that now exist in or near the locality, the palace is first in age and interest, and commands precedence of everything else.

Long ago, in the wastes of unrecorded time, when this now populous and fashionable quarter was a barren flat, very low and swampy, some worthy citizens of London bethought them of setting apart a portion of it for a benevolent purpose, and starting it with a sufficient endowment to begin upon. The objects of their charity were the most helpless and friendless persons to be found in or about the town—a case that cried aloud for succour and mercy.

Amongst the sanitary arrangements most strictly enforced in the narrow streets of London, none were so severe as the regulations against lepers, swine, and dogs. These three were regarded as equally dangerous to the cleanliness and health of the city, and the poor human lepers were condemned in the same ordinances with the wallowing pigs and prowling curs that infested the kennels, and rendered them at once dangerous and impassable. But the edicts against the dogs admitted of exceptions. Dogs of quality—or, as they are expressly called in the municipal orders, “genteel dogs”—were exempt from penalty, and allowed to appear in public. No exceptions, however, were made in the other cases. There were no lepers or pigs of quality, and every man's hand was against them.

We are referring to a time, many centuries back in our annals, when medical practice was purely empirical, and opened the door to a thousand superstitions. Under that dispensation of imperfect knowledge and unbounded credulity, the leper was regarded with horror, and treated with cruelty; and many maladies, somewhat similar in type, although different in character, were confounded in the same category, and subjected to the same penalties. Lepers were forbidden the city, and the wardens of the ports, gates, and posterns were sworn not to admit them. Any such found begging, or loitering in the streets, or caught within the walls, day or night, under any circumstances, were driven out and punished. Yet there was one drop of pity and tenderness in these stringent laws. Although the afflicted were themselves prohibited from entering the city, they were allowed to be represented by an attorney or proctor, who was privileged to go into the parish churches on Sundays to collect alms for his unfortunate clients. The funds thus obtained were humanely expended upon hospitals expressly provided for the sick in distant quarters, where they were separated from “the haunt or company of sound people.” And such was the purpose to which the good citizens of whom we have spoken devoted, at their own cost, that space of ground on which the palace now stands.

At what time the hospital was built is unknown. All that can be affirmed with confidence is, that it could not have been before the Conquest, while there is good reason to conclude that it must have been soon afterwards. It was erected for the reception of fourteen unmarried women, and was dedicated to St. James. The saints were supposed to possess particular influence over particular ailments; and as St. Vitus took madness and poison under his protection, St. James, to whom, in the old symbolical representations of the church, the top-joint of the fore-finger was dedicated, may be presumed to have extended his care to infectious diseases. The charitable founders endowed the hospital with land sufficient for

its support ; and its resources were subsequently enriched by a gift of £55 rent annually, eight brethren being added to minister divine service ; so that it came at last to partake somewhat of a conventual character. Considerable grants of land were afterwards bestowed upon it in Westminster, Hampstead, and other places ; and Edward I., who was most rigorous against lepers within the bounds of the city, showed his consideration for them outside the walls by confirming all these grants, and by further conferring upon the institution the privilege of holding an annual fair of seven days, beginning on the eve of the patron saint.

The situation was discreetly chosen. It was as dreary and lonely as could be desired for the isolation of its inmates, who looked upon one of the most desolate landscapes within the girdle of fair Middlesex. The distant height of Harrow-on-the-Hill came into view as far off as the eye could reach ; snatches of stunted hedges, or a few trees dropped here and there, marked the rude tracks that led northward and westward into the country ; and a remote mill, or the lofty cross of some solitary spital, might be discerned on the horizon to the north of Cripplegate, and stretching away eastward towards Moregate and the ancient suburb of Soers ditch. Whether the maiden sisters of St. James's asked alms of wayfarers from their doors and lattices with a cup and clapper, as was the custom, may, we think, be doubted, because wayfarers were rare in that out-of-the-way neighbourhood ; but, however that may be, the prosperity of the house continued to augment until the reign of Henry VIII., when a tempestuous change came over the tranquil dreams of its inmates.

Religious houses, and charitable foundations connected with them, were going by the mast just then in England ; and St. James's Hospital, combining the principal features of both, went with the rest. Some say that Henry VIII. sacrilegiously seized upon the establishment, and appropriated its revenues, amounting to no less than a clear £1000 a-year, to his own use. But at a time when all similar endowments were being absorbed by the State, a rich sisterhood, whose domicile was separated only by a dead flat of marshy fields from the royal residence, could hardly have hoped to escape. Their fate was inevitable. Besides, the character of the establishment had undergone a complete revolution. It no longer fulfilled the object for which it was instituted, the sanitary necessity having ceased. The malady, which had been introduced into Europe at the period of the Crusades, had disappeared before the end of the fifteenth century, so that the sisterhood who inherited the benefits of the foundation in the subsequent cycle represented not leprosy, but the tradition of it. Under such circumstances, the taint having died out, their lives may be presumed

to have been passed in the serenest condition of enjoyment. They were comfortably housed, and plenteously, if not daintily, provided, well cared for in mundane things, assiduously prayed for in things spiritual, and as happy as birds all day long, with the sweet bells of the sanctuary ringing them, from morning till night, to offices of grace and thanksgiving. To be sure Henry stopped the bells, and put an end to the luxury; but to his credit be it added that, instead of sending the sisters out to beg on the highway, he royally compounded with them for their life interest in the charity, and pensioned them off. Having thus fairly got the hospital into his own hands, he demolished the building, and reared in its place a noble Manor House, turning the swampy fields into a park, surrounded by a high brick wall, embracing the whole extent of the interval to Whitehall.

The transition is striking from the sick nuns of St. James's to their successors. No two modes of existence present a more surprising contrast. The dim cells and dark passages, the dark refectory, the miniature chapel, and the stillness that brooded over the whole, were displaced by gay chambers, picture-galleries, mazy stairs leading in and out of secret places, and a hubbub of soldiers and courtiers, and fine ladies trooping about at all hours, with a great clamour of drums and trumpets, heralds, knights, and tilting, and crowds of idle people coming to gaze upon the glitter of the Court.

Henry, at the date of this transformation, was at the height of his passion for Anne Boleyn, and in the year in which the work was finished, he married her. The Palace was probably expressly intended for her residence, and the first guests it received were His Majesty and his new bride.

The Park was filled with game, and strictly preserved. In Elizabeth's time, an inscription in verse over the entrance from Whitehall abounded in conceits about Acteon and Diana; and deer sported on its sward even so late as the reign of Charles II. In Henry's time the Park formed a pleasaunce to the two palaces, and, curiously enough, Anne Boleyn is linked with the history of both; for she was privately married in a garret of the palace of Whitehall, and then removed across the secluded grounds to take up her residence at St. James's. Everybody knows the tragedy that followed, and how brief a space elapsed between the booming of the cannon that proclaimed her nuptials, and the tolling of the muffled bell that announced her execution. While she was undergoing that piteous death at the Tower, the king, to show his satisfaction or indifference, ostentatiously dressed himself in white, and the next morning married Jane Seymour.

From that period as if, indeed, royalty shuddered at the thought

of inhabiting apartments that recalled such terrible memories, the Palace of St. James's was used only as a sort of palace of ease to Whitehall, until the Stuarts came in, when James I. bestowed it upon Prince Henry, who was created Prince of Wales, with a household of upwards of four hundred persons. Who can say what different channels our domestic history might run in had that prince lived? But the doom that was impending over the dynasty betrayed signs even thus early. The king and his son never agreed; their tempers sowed discords between them; and when the prince died, at the premature age of nineteen, his father carrying resentment beyond the grave, prohibited the court from going into mourning. A royal burial, however, took place at Westminster. The costly funeral procession which issued from the gate of St. James's on that occasion was followed, at no very distant interval, by a procession of another kind, in which the pall, anticipating the stroke of death, was hung upon the living. It was in the bleak month of January that Charles I. was removed from Windsor to the palace of St. James's to take his trial. He was brought to town so unexpectedly, that his master of the wardrobe had scarcely time to prepare his apartment in the palace. But there was little need. He had only eleven days to live, and in that brief time he had not much leisure to think about satin hangings, velvet couches, and looking-glasses.

If we could suppose that Charles II., who was born in St. James's, and whose memories of it must have been embittered by painful comparisons, was capable of being touched deeply by the misfortune of his family, we should be furnished at once with an explanation of his reason for abandoning the old pile, and living at Whitehall; but as we find him daily abroad in the park, which he has daily improved, lounging under Nell Gwynn's windows, close to the palace walls, and perpetually haunting the adjoining courts and passages, dropping into the stables, and exploring the chambers, with some dim design, probably, of doing something which something else is always putting out of his head, we cannot give him credit for being very sensitive about old associations. He prefers Whitehall simply because it answers his purpose better. It is more spacious and gorgeous. There are plenty of rooms in it, perplexingly situated; for the ladies of honour, and no end to "practicable doors" for the high comedy of the Jennings, the Prices, the Stuarts, the Hobarts, and the Temples; with luxurious accommodation, besides, for the Castlemaines and Portsmouths, who are as independent of each other as if they dwelt in separate pavilions, with canopied balconies looking out over gardens trimmed by the pictorial hand of Verrio. Not a thought about the scene which took place up there on the scaffold out of the windows a

few years ago, nor a warning of the scene that is to take place a few years hence in that "glorious gallery," thrilling with music, and cards, and French songs, and voluptuous dalliance on the Sunday night; then a suspicion of poison, and in a week "all is dust," and the heralds are proclaiming James II. at Whitehall Gate, and the conduits are again running with wine, just as they did when King Charles, with a red feather in his hat, and the Duke of York by his side, made his entry into London, followed by so mighty a cavalcade that it took seven hours to pass under the arch of Temple Bar.

James was fond of the palace that bore his saint's name. He had resided in it after the Restoration, and he regarded it also with interest as the scene of a memorable incident that befel him in his boyhood. Having been made a prisoner in the civil war, and kept under surveillance here, he ingeniously effected his escape, not in the disguise of a footman, as his father had done from Oxford a year before, but by a more legitimate dramatic expedient. He and his brother and sister, and other young people in the palace, were in the habit of playing hide-and-seek at night after supper; and he used to outstrip all his playfellows in the skill with which he would hide in such secret places as to baffle discovery. All this was premeditated, so that no particular surprise should be excited when at last they went to search for him, and could not find him. One night, instead of hiding himself as usual, he made his way down the back-stairs into the garden, and from thence, by means of a key with which he had provided himself, into the park. A cloak and a perigwig, supplied by a servant in waiting outside, enabled him to continue his flight without detection to Spring Gardens, where a gentleman, bearing the appropriate name of Tripp, was ready with a hackney coach. The next news heard of the little duke announced his safe arrival in Holland.

The last Stuart birth that took place in the palace was that of the Prince Frederic Francis Edward, better known as the Pretender, exalted to heaven in the heroic couplets of Dryden, and stigmatised in a thousand lampoons as an impostor conveyed to the royal chamber under the lid of a warming-pan. Speedily followed another slide of the lantern, when the Prince of Orange appeared upon the scene, and received the congratulations of the people in the very chamber where, only a few hours before, James had eaten a hasty dinner, over which a Roman Catholic priest had pronounced a benediction.

William bestowed the palace upon the Princess Anne, who afterwards became queen, and her husband, Prince George of Denmark, the *est-il possible* of the only joke his banished father-in-law was

ever known to have made. Then came the burning of Whitehall; and then followed the reign of Anne, when St. James's became the permanent town residence of the sovereign, and so continued till the time of George III., who removed, upon a grant from Parliament, to Buckingham House, so called after its founder, Sheffield, Duke of Buckingham, a man of great vanity and small parts. From that time to the present the old palace has been used only for State purposes.

The Court of the early Georges, although marked by external decorum and formality, was by no means free from secret vices. Here ladies were lodged as they had formerly been at Whitehall, only less ostentatiously, while the dullness that prevailed in the interior went a great way to mitigate the scandal. The results, however, were much the same. The fat Countess of Darlington, or the lean Countess of Kendal, with whom there was some talk of a left-handed marriage, may not in all respects pair off with the Portsmouths or the Clevelands, but the balance on the side of public morality is hardly perceptible; and the biography of Mrs. Howard, or the miserable story of Miss Vane, might have furnished copious materials for the draggled muse of Rochester.

The feud between James I. and the Prince of Wales seems to have been transmitted to the kings of the Georgian era and their eldest sons. George I. entertained so fierce a feeling of jealousy and anger against his son—afterwards George II.—that he turned him and his household out of the palace at a moment's notice. They had so little time for preparation, that the prince and princess were obliged to take refuge in the house of their chamberlain, until a residence could be provided for them. The street ballads made merry with this vulgar quarrel in the royal family; describing the prince's retinue as snatching up whatever they could put their hands on, and the maids of honour—the Bellendens, Howards, and Lepels, with whose wit and charms Pope has made all the world acquainted—going about laughing, or jeering, or singing snatches of "Over the hills, and far away." Matters were still worse between George II. and his son Frederick, who kept an opposition court at Leicester House; and George III. was so entirely estranged from his son, afterwards George IV., that when the prince went to the palace to express his condolence after his majesty's life had been attempted by Margaret Nicholson, the king refused to see him.

George IV. was born in St. James's Palace, in the midst of good omens. It was the anniversary of the accession of his family to the throne; and at the moment of his birth—or, according to some scrupulous authorities, a few moments before—a waggon laden with gold, the spoils of a Spanish ship captured by an English

frigate, passed under the windows of the palace on its way to the Mint. At twelve months old the prince was shown to the public from the same windows; at three years old he received a deputation of Ancient Britons, and responded to their address in a little sentence which he is said to have delivered with precision; and when he was seven years old a drawing-room was held in his name.

William IV. was the last of our sovereigns born here; but in the early part of his life his profession carried him into other scenes, and in his latter years his name was associated with the palace only in reference to public ceremonials and state festivities.

All these people have passed away—the hospital nuns and the palace beauties, the kings and priests, poets, politicians, and courtiers. Even of the old palace nothing remains, except the Presence Chamber, which successive sovereigns have somewhat tampered with, and the gateway and towers facing St. James's-street, which are preserved in their integrity. Another, and a wiser age has opened to us, and if we could fill the park again with the figures that once flitted through its devious walks, it would not be half so interesting a sight as that of the streams of pedestrians that now roll through it all day long. A peep amongst the wits at Lockett's, or the maids of honour masked in the bowers of the Mulberry Garden; Cromwell jolting in a sedan, or Charles whispering over the wall to Nelly; Swift repeating to some fine lady of the court his eternal joke about the cure for a toothache, or his great pun on a hare; Richardson, seated under a tree, meditating a sequel to "Pamela;" Bub Dodington ogling a window in the Mall, where he pretends to see a pretty face; Bolingbroke reading a passage out of the "Craftsman" to Pulteney; or Walpole passing Chesterfield, whom he knows to be his enemy, with that lambent smile upon his face which even his friends shrank from;—all these, and five hundred celebrities more who might easily be gathered into the panorama, would form a less attractive picture than the open park, in the reign of Queen Victoria, receiving incessant contributions of passengers, at all hours, from the vast hives of population by which it is surrounded.

And the palace, too, has advanced with the moral and educational progress of the age, and become the pattern of the purest domestic life in the country. There is no longer a whisper of scandal in the corridor, and the odious compound "back-stairs" has dropped out of the language. The children of royalty, no longer trained up in an artificial climate, and kept apart from the people, are brought out into the world to obtain experience where alone it can be obtained, and to fit themselves for government by mixing amongst men.

Health and long life to the judicious mother and beloved queen,

endeared to her subjects by the integrity of her principles and the soundness of her judgment! It will be for historians years hence—may they be far distant!—to delineate a character to which contemporary writers cannot do justice without appearing to run into exaggeration.

THE BROKEN LILY

SHE was in truth a lily fair,
Sweet floweret of an hour,
Too pure to bloom in earth's cold clime,
More meet for heaven's bower.

E'en as the fragile lily sheds
Sweet perfume o'er our way,
So round our inmost hearts she flung
A radiance bright as day.

So free, so joyous, full of glee,
We deemed her *all* our own,
Nor thought we that the cloud of woe
Around *her* could be thrown.

But oh! the blast of sickness came;
Our lily quivered—bent.
One fatal gust, and on the ground
Her shattered form she leant.

Vainly we struggled to rebind
The life-links that were riven;
But no! the shaft of death had sped,
And our fair flower was given.

Gently we laid her in her rest
'Neath sods and early flowers.
A broken lily tells too well
How soon she went with God to dwell,
'Mid brighter realms than ours!

WHAT WE DID WITHOUT HIM

WHAT we did, we did conscientiously and soberly—my father, mother, and I. I will describe our trio to you faithfully and without reserve; for I am matter-of-fact, and give you a rough and natural “gem,” leaving it to your discretion to polish or let alone. We live in a crowded London street, with a basket-maker’s shop on one side of us, and a boarding-school for small boys on the other. The master of the said boarding-school is an “exemplary” man, one of those people of negative virtue—right, simply because they abstain from wrong—passing through the world unmolested and “respectable,” neither shocking the good by evil, nor offending the evil by prominent good; his wife the epitome of womanly, motherly, and sisterly virtues (so their prospectus inferred), bound up in plain, mouse-coloured cloth—no! merino or alpaca in summer—with an ominous wrinkle on her forehead, which, to my mind, gave anything but a “motherly” look to her face.

The little boys walked out at twelve, through the dingy, bustling streets that intersect our neighbourhood. Half their allotted time expired, the other half brings them back, past the dingy, too-familiar shops, to the dark green house-door, through cheerless passages to the so-called “family dining-room,” where the vice-mother and father preside.

I used often to sit at my window when the mid-day bell rang, watching the little fellows, as, two by two, they crept down the door-steps and into the street, wondering where and what were their homes; if their parents were driven by necessity to leave them, month after month, under such dreary, unhealthy influence; if the mother did not glean, on their occasional return, some crumbs that told her how her child’s best years for good and wholesome impressions were being damped by the moral fog that rested on the “Seminary for Young Gentlemen;” and then I thought, perhaps they are struggling with privation and secret want, to afford even that poor pittance, and see, in dull monotonous training, something preferable to a youth of ignorance and intellectual death.

My father, a stern, practical man, honest and brave in principle, yet lacking much of the tenderness of nature that makes man beloved of woman; my mother, gentle, impulsive, and easily influenced—a bird with spreading, beautiful wings in the sunshine, but drooping and almost voiceless in the shadow—such seem my parents as I now look back.

My parents had had their struggles. Nineteen years before the time I now write of, my father, then but secretary to some unknown

society, fell in love, soberly and after consideration, with the parish curate's young sister. He had not more than £40 a-year, and she had nothing at all; but what of that? Love found a way, as true love always does. How to live upon little, in a worldly sense, is more really feasible than a semi-kind of existence on loving words, loving looks—pleasant earnestness of future happiness, but not substantial enough to grow strong and healthy upon! So he increased his income by copying law matters for an attorney in the little town during his evening hours, taking two young boys for Latin and arithmetic twice a-week in the early morning; while his wife, by strict, nay, severe economy, managed to eke out sufficient to live, if not comfortably, yet out of debt, and happy in being with him she loved.

Better times came, fortunately, for I believe my advent was within two years of their marriage, and the tiny cottage in the country was exchanged for a tinier one near London; still it was an advance to venture from their humble retirement, and peer into the busier haunts of men, seeking employment of a more lucrative character. The clergyman of the parish gave my father letters of recommendation for ability to do everything, I believe, from the first four rules of arithmetic to the highest impossibilities in mathematical science. He therefore soon became clerk in an old-established banking-house, and coming home from his engagement, announced laughingly to my mother that now we could have sugar in our tea, and, perhaps, a pudding on Sundays might gladden my youthful heart. My father's income increasing, so did his work: he became absorbed of necessity with stern practical business, and our leisure time grew daily shorter and less unrestrained. My mother, pining for the freedom and beauty of her early home, insensibly yielded to the depressing influence of close, confined air and noise eternal, and seemed to me to lose the gentle cheerfulness that had buoyed her up in her early married days of great privation. A gloomy, gray old house was this our home, with narrow, small-paned windows, darkened passages and a side view into a miserable back street, whence the sound of screaming children, rude, irritable voices of wretched girls and women, mingling with the roar and surging of the surrounding thoroughfares, ascended with wearying monotony. This was for years to be our home—*home!*

With all will and desire on my part, I could never be the brightener of a household—the crystal that all the family circle might look into, and there behold bright, beautiful forms. A helper, adviser, and consoler I might be; but God withheld from me the lighter qualities, the telling touches of mirth, brilliancy, and elasticity of mind that give polish to a substantial nature, and make it a loved and ever-varying delight.

I helped my mother in her domestic duties ; I copied and aided my father in his more arduous ones ; but I never rose to a higher, brighter life ; I never lived in my solitary hours the twofold spiritual life that those more gifted do. No fairy seat wreathed with fragrant flowers jewelled with dews of heaven ; no listening to the voices of the heavenly choir, mixing in their joy, quaffing of their existence ; and returning to the daily duty, daily care, refreshed and invigorated with an everlasting strength. Mine was the constant handling of the iron and steel, the brick and mortar of life ; so my hands were formed and accustomed to the work, hard, and ungenial.

Up at seven to eight o'clock breakfast, off to the bank at nine, home at six to the hurried dinner ; then write, correct, revise, few words spoken, short answers to timid questions ; no happy walks in the fresh, pure air ; no evening rambles, no morning plucking of flowers, no flow of happy domestic talk ; but the round of daily toil—business in the face, business in the words, business in the thoughts, business everywhere—all this told, and told sadly, on my mother's health. Such was the state of our home affairs, when news came from my father's family that gave us mingled anxiety and pleasure. Some few years before, his favourite sister had married a rich West Indian gentleman, and had gone to live with him in his native country. They had there born to them a little boy ; the young mother died, and the father, knowing that a long stay in that country would inevitably injure his little child, determined, when he was three years old, to send him to his dead mother's family in England. They were now old and ailing, and being unwilling to take charge of the tiny stranger, wrote to my father, desiring him to test my mother's feelings on the subject. After several evenings' consideration *pro* and *con*, it was decided that Cousin Arthur should become our sacred charge, our pet and plaything. *I have told you what we did without him.*

Arty came, four years old, fair, delicate, and engaging. How could we help loving him with the concentrated love that had been lying dormant in our hearts so long ? How could my father help laying down his papers with mock resignation, and talking baby-talk as he had never talked it for now nearly fifteen years ; how could he help trotting, ambling, or galloping round the room with his tiny driver, whip in hand, shouting and cheering behind him in wild delight ; How could my gentle mother resist buying many coloured picture-books, cups and balls, wooden geography maps, and arithmetic made easy and amusing ? How could she help recalling from the regretted past snatches of old songs and hymns and nursery rhymes, tales of gnomes, fairies, and mysterious people that live in fertile imaginations ? So the dull house rung with

laughter and childish merriment; the old chairs and furniture were tossed about in a manner perilous to their old frames; the ancient hearthrug wondered at sundry play-toys its youth had never seen. Morning rose with patter of little feet and childish babble to welcome it. Day had its run and scamper. Tea-time its jug of fresh warm milk, its bun or oaten cake; evening its happy calm, listening to a pure sweet voice lisping words that fell on my parents' ears as a holy tune heard once more, bringing back to their remembrance the days of my glad childhood, when, poor and inexperienced as they were, they had yet time to be happy and content. I have my baby cousin's portrait now before me, pale and blue-eyed as a veiled angel; and an angel's influence he shed about our house. He would ever tell us that his mother, his dead mother, never left him; she would kiss him ere he slept and when he awoke. As he walked he would oftentimes gaze upon what seemed vacancy, and his eyes spoke love, though his lips were still. At such times a chill came over us, and yet we did not speak the words we thought—"Shall we have him long?" His hair of the pure flaxen, that in the sunlight shone like gold, fell on his shoulders in thick, massive curls. His black velvet tunic, broad sash, his exquisitely worked collar and ribbon bow, made him look to our eyes like a beautiful picture, animated with the poetry of childhood, and the innocent happiness of one of Christ's "little ones." As he knelt at my mother's knee in the evening-time, lisping his infant prayer, and looking with deep-searching eyes into her face, we felt better and purer, for we knew his angel was beholding the face of our Father which is in Heaven. My mother's step grew lighter than it had been for years; her eyes shone with a new brightness; her youth seemed to have been renewed by this little child's coming. I myself seemed to expand in his pure atmosphere; yet each of us, as we felt the change, almost feared to rest content upon it; it seemed too genial to last. I had visions when he was a little older, of the happy time I would spend teaching my little cousin the ways of learning—smoothing every difficult path, so that his soul might grow strong ere the battle of life was to be fought; but these were all day dreams, unlike myself, and from each I awoke with a dim foreboding of ill.

Days and months glided on, and each cold wind that blew, each damp day that threw its misty cloak around us, brought the shadow nearer and more tangible. To our home, our hearth, came one, clad to our eyes in sombre, sable garments, but to our child as an angel of love and light. We wept, we prayed, we watched for the early dawn, and panted for the cooling air of night; but the angel drew the little one away.

The angel who came was the angel of DEATH!

The old house is solitary ; but there are voices lingering among the darkened passages, that I know are often raised in gratitude to bless us as we pass. Our walks may be no longer cheered by the joyous prattle of our little one, but many poor and wretched homes now hear sympathising words, where there had been only silence or complaint. Many a motherless or fatherless child is clothed, fed, and taught, where all before was misery and neglect. Shall we, then, say that it was not " well " of God, by the ministry of a little child, to draw us nearer unto Himself ?

At times the darkness of the past overshadows us, but we steal out into the streets, and there, among the poor and needy, give a little of the much we have received ; and amid all the business, duties, and loneliness we have returned to, we have yet a bright pure face—now an angel's face—to think upon ; a loving voice we can still hear !

Yes ! every day brings back some soothing and teaching memory, as we ponder *what shall we do without him.*

HOMES FOR THE HOUSEHOLDS OF THE POOR

I LIKE that word "household." It expresses so many ideas, every one of which enters into the broad ideal of human comfort and human virtue. "Home" is a sweet word; but the word "household" has a much wider signification, while yet it includes all that can make home dear.

A bachelor may have a home; so may a widow; so may an orphan; and to each of these, as to others who may be more desolate than either, home has its own inalienable and essential privileges. But a household combines with the privileges of home the charms and obligations of a more or less ramified society. It involves in a greater or a less degree the blessed bonds of family love. The bonds are often broken; the harmony is, alas! too often disturbed; the ties sometimes exist without any love at all to bless them; but a household is, when it is what it ought to be, the most gracious state out of heaven.

My own household is a very humble one, for I am but a poor striver in the world, and work very hard every day for returns that are small at the best, sadly precarious, and all insufficient to suggest to my mind, in its most sanguine moods, the hope of wealth, or even to promise the opportunity of repose when the time for repose shall come. But I love my household, and I am proud of it.

When I have paid my rent (and, to be honest, I sometimes find it a difficult matter to scrape even so much money as makes one quarter's rent together), I feel that my house is my own, that no stranger has a right to enter my door. This house of mine is itself a memorial and witness of independence and of freedom. I am as safe from intrusion within its modest enclosure as though it were a castle, surrounded with walls and moat and defended by bands of armed men.

And it is worthy of note, that this sanctity of my house gives all within its value. How could I romp with my children if all the world might come in and stare at my foolishness? How could I gaze in silent adoration at my wife (she will read this, and, as I have never *said* anything to her about adoration for a long while, I use the word "silent" advisedly), if my neighbours might sneer at my sentimentalism? Love, peace, comfort, appetite, sleep are all facilitated by the fact that my household is an independent, well-assured association.

I remember that Solomon says somewhere, "Drink waters out of thine own cistern, and running waters out of thine own well."

... Let them be only thine own, and not strangers' with thee?" by which I understand the wise man to mean that there are certain operations and certain privileges belonging to the household life of a man which may not without prejudice be shared in by strangers. A miscellaneous crowd of people shall not draw water from my pump. I am the most hospitable man in the world, but no man shall have half my bed—no, nor half my bed-room. "A double-bedded room" is an organisation of discomfort and indecency.

There is much practical common-sense in that injunction of the Great Master: "When thou prayest, enter into thy closet and *shut the door.*" Seclusion makes the sanctuary. Every house should be a sanctuary from the world; and every member of the household should have within the house a sanctuary from the household—a "holy of holies"—consecrated to his own exclusive service, and into which none but himself may enter. Perhaps this is not possible with all of us; but where it is possible it is an immeasurable blessing: and the perfection of household administration may be precisely calculated by the extent to which this principle is carried out. The integrity of family life is a most important safeguard of moral character; and whatever conserves character secures reputation.

If I had not a comfortable house to live in, I am afraid I should be incapable of rendering any great reverence to the claims of home-life. If I must have the companionship of strangers, I think I should rather have it amid the blazing excitements of the tavern than in the darkness and morose melancholy of my own vermin-infested garret. And if I were too poor to afford the cheap bewilderment of gaslight and gin at the public-house, I am persuaded I should be in my poverty but a sorry father, and not a very patient husband.

It is easy to talk about a contented mind; but content itself may become an impracticable virtue. I often quote, by way of soothing the fever of hopeless ambition, by which I am sometimes tormented, old Robert Southwell's curt, compact, and weighty lines:—

"My conscience is my crown:
Contented thoughts my rest;
My heart is happy in itself;
My bliss is in my breast.

* * * * *
My wishes are but few,
All easy to fulfil;
I take the limits of my power
The bounds unto my will.

* * * * *
I feel no care of coin;
Well-doing is my wealth;
My mind to me an empire is,
While grace affordeth health."

This is all very fine, and in a certain sphere it is all very true ; but Pope, who had a shrewd judgment, pointed to an ideal of contentment much nearer the mark when he sang—

“ Happy the man whose wish and care,
A few paternal acres bound,
 Content to breathe his native air
In his own native ground.”

Yes ; a snug little freehold adds immensely to a man's chances of distinguishing himself in the graces of Christian contentment !

And next to a freehold, a distinct, isolated, independent tenement is desirable.

I would, indeed, include the latter among the necessities of true life. It is not an idle luxury, to be panted for as an indulgence of a selfishness cultivated to the finest point of epicurean nicety, or for the celebration of some sinister conceit ; but an unquestionable essential of health, peace, and virtue.

The way in which we often classify luxuries on the one side, and necessities of life on the other, is really very silly. We say that bread is a necessary ; we forget that fresh air is also a necessary. Water to drink we regard as essential to the sustenance of our frames ; a bath is with thousands an unknown duty ! “ Avoid poison,” says the most commonplace philanthropist ; and if you want to use fatal compounds or fatal essences for any purpose, you are very careful to label the bottle. Nearly half the houses in London might with advantage be so labelled ! “ Poison ” should be written in letters of fire along the fronts of them, and over the doorways. Yet, we not only do not caution the poor victims ; we actually take heavy rents for the places where damp, darkness, and foul vapours combine to destroy the lives of the miserable wretches who resort to them for shelter from the storm, the blast, the frost, and the invisible murderers of the night.

Better far the tempests of heaven than the pestilence which man cultivates on the earth ! Better far a bed of snow on the open heath, than the over-crowded floors of a thousand metropolitan dwelling-houses !

If a butcher sells putrid meat to a customer to whom the cheapness of the article is a recommendation, he is fined or imprisoned. Serve him right. But if the landlord of a hundred houses lets his houses in such a state as must inevitably tend to the destruction of his tenants, he may pass for a gentleman.

If a chemist sell arsenic in mistake for violet-powder, the plea of carelessness will not save him from the penalties of manslaughter ; but if a landlord dispenses poison, not less fatal, though possibly somewhat slower in its action, then arsenic, in the atmosphere of the houses he lets, he pockets his profit on death,

and rides to his neighbour's ball, and possibly to his seat on the magisterial bench.

Fortunately, the conditions of health are beginning to be understood in this country. Sanitary science has long been studied by the few: its importance is now to a good degree comprehended by the many. Great improvements have been effected during the last twenty years, but much evil still remains. By the passing of the Act for regulating common lodging-houses, much good was rendered possible, but over-crowding in single-rooms remains; and, indeed, in many districts necessarily increases. Even where over-crowding does not exist in its worst forms, there are hundreds upon hundreds of cases in which the laws of health are, ignorantly or wantonly, violated.

Greater progress has been effected in these respects in country districts than in large towns. Many of the great landowners and employers of labour have learned the lesson, that it is true economy to take good care of the physical health and comfort of their human assistants, as well as of their brute slaves.

It is some years now since the Duke of Bedford made use of the following pregnant words on this subject:—"Cottage building, except to a cottage speculator, who exacts immoderate rents for scanty and defective habitations, is, we all know, a bad investment of money; but this is not the light in which such a subject should be viewed by landlords, from whom it is surely not too much to expect that, whilst they are building and improving farm-houses, home-steads, and cattle-sheds, they will also build and improve dwellings for their labourers in sufficient number to meet the improved and improving cultivation of the land. To improve the dwellings of the labouring classes, and afford them the means of greater cleanliness, health, and comfort in their own homes; to extend education and thus raise the social and moral habits of those most valuable members of the community, are among the first duties, and ought to be among the truest pleasures of every landlord." The Duke acted on the principle thus eloquently laid down, to the extent of £70,000, in the course of about eight years, in improving the cottage property on his immense estates. Within a shorter time, the Duke of Northumberland, who died the other day, devoted £100,000 to the same gracious, yet really provident undertaking.

It would be wrong, even here, not to allude, in passing, to the immense service rendered to this cause by the late revered Prince Consort. It should be universally known, that when the Commissioners for the great International Exhibition, in 1851, refused an urgent application for a site for model-cottages, on the ground that "a model lodging-house did not come within the design of the Exhibition," his Royal Highness manifested the most lively interest

in the proposition, and the houses were erected on his own account, and under his own immediate superintendence, in the cavalry barrack-yard, opposite to the Exhibition. It is only doing the simplest justice to the memory of the Prince to say that the "Albert Cottages," as they were called, really initiated the most momentous enterprise of social reform of which this generation has witnessed the birth, and the fruits of which all coming generations shall enjoy.

The statistical demonstrations of the importance of healthy dwellings which I have at command are literally overwhelming.

Dr. Druit, in a paper read before the Royal Institute of British Architects, in 1860, the object of which was to prove that "the demolition and reconstruction of a large part of the buildings which occupy the surface of this great city, and the better management of the remainder, are the means through which we may hope to be delivered from some of our common domestic pestilences," gives some noteworthy facts. Here is one:—"Some years ago," he says, "I witnessed a remarkable operation, in one of the leading metropolitan hospitals. The skill and coolness of the surgeon were wonderful; but the patient died of low inflammation. I heard one of the young men attached to the hospital say—'That patient was in bed 19; *every patient in that bed dies after an operation. It receives a blast from a watercloset!* I entreated the surgeon not to put this one there; but he does not believe in sanitary measures.'"

From January, 1837, to August, 1841, the mortality of women in childbed in the General Lying-in Hospital was at the rate of 76 in every 1000. Then a ventilating system was introduced, but the nurses did not understand it; and the old open windows being in abeyance, the death-rate during the twelve months next after the hospital was reopened was at the rate of 90·90 per 1000. A period of perfect ventilation followed, and was maintained for seven years, during which the death-rate was reduced to 4·81 per thousand. The committee determined to save the expense of this system of ventilation, which in April, 1850, was discontinued, when the death-rate rose to 26·77 per 1000! Could testimony be more curiously irresistible than this? Yet here is testimony more curious, and, wisely weighed, not less convincing. Dr. Farr proved that, taking the mean of the cholera epidemics of 1848 and 1854, in London, nearly 15 per 1000 of those living under ten feet of elevation were carried away by that terrible scourge, whilst, at the highest elevation, only 1 in 1000 was seized by it; and London might be terraced according to the degrees of elevation, the mortality from cholera was in exact inverse ratio to the elevation of the terrace!

It is a clearly ascertained fact that the average duration of life among the wealthy classes is nearly double that of the poor and industrial orders in the community.

To further show that the state of the dwellings has to do with the death-rate of the population, let it be said, that whilst in the best-regulated of the model lodging-houses recently established in London, the average rate of mortality is in no case over 13 to 14 in 1000, in the very districts in which they are situate, the average has been 27 to 28 per 1000.

Mr. Lee, one of the superintending inspectors of the Board of Health, has given it as his deliberate conviction, based on a careful examination of the sanitary condition of forty towns, that the great mass of the population lose nearly half the natural period of their lives.

The late Dr. Southwood Smith, one of the pioneers in the great work of sanitary reform, in a pamphlet published ten years ago, gave some minute statistics, comparing the death-rate in the "Metropolitan Buildings," erected and managed by the "Metropolitan Association for Improving the Dwellings of the Industrial Classes," with the average death-rate of the metropolis on the one hand, and with that of the very worst district of London on the other. The result is absolutely startling. In the "Metropolitan Buildings," during the year ending March 31, 1853, the deaths were 7 in 1000; in the whole of the metropolis, they were 22 in 1000; in "the Potteries," Kensington, they were 40 in 1000. Had the sanitary regulations been equal, the death-rate would assuredly have been equal too.

Mr. Henry Roberts, F.S.A., whose labours in this field have been prodigious, has cited the returns of the Registrar-General to show that during ten years—from 1850 to 1860—the death-rate was actually *reduced*, in Liverpool, from 39 to 26 in 1000; in Bradford, from $28\frac{1}{2}$ to 20 in 1000; in Croydon, from 28 to 21 in 1000; and in London, from 25 to 23 in 1000.

The normal standard of human mortality is generally reckoned at 17 in 1000; to reach that standard should be the prime aim of all social statesmanship; and our experience—though, so far, exceedingly imperfect—is sufficient to assure us that that the result may be attained. Mr. Blakie tells us, in his excellent little volume entitled "Better Days for the Working People," that in Scotland a million of the population of that part of her Majesty's dominions have dwellings of only one apartment. The proportion of people in London to the general population who live in that condition is even greater. And though much admirable work has been done by the "Metropolitan Association for the Improvement of the Dwellings of the Industrious Classes," already alluded to; by the "Society

for Improving the Condition of the Labouring Classes ;" by individual enterprise (in connexion with which the names of Miss Burdett Coutts, Mr. Peabody, and Mr. Alderman Waterlow, should be mentioned with particular respect and gratitude) ; and last, but not least, by the Limited Liability Joint Stock Company, presided over by that most practical of the younger race of our living statesmen, Lord Stanley—the extent of misery, and its inevitable accompaniment, vice, which remains to be subdued and vanquished, would appal any mind which should be capable of comprehending the picture in all its imports and significancies, and which, at the same time, should be destitute of that nobleness of faith which some experience of the omnipotencies of Divine and human love never fails to inspire in the heart of all who have felt their gentle and blessed force.

Even in London it is being proved that this reform may work itself out on strictly economical principles. In other words, in spite of the inordinate value of land, household accommodation on a healthy scale, and on a plan which does not set the conditions of social morality utterly at defiance, may be provided for all but the very poor on remunerative terms. Alderman Waterlow has demonstrated this fact. The wretched places in which so many of the families of the working people of London now reside are seldom more than two stories, often not more than one story, high ; and they are so old, besides having been originally so badly built, that they require incessant outlays for repairs. Obviously there is but one way of counteracting the disadvantage of incomparably dear land, and that is by running up the buildings erected on it to a high range. Space in the air is cheap enough, and the higher we go from the surface the better does the air become.

The moral bearings of this question, as I have already hinted, are not less significant, and certainly not less momentous, than those physical aspects of it at which I have more definitively glanced. Domestic virtue, for example, is a plant of most delicate growth. Deny it a congenial soil, and it will never thrive ; rob it of a watchful and gentle protection, and it must inevitably perish. Social refinement and public purity will, to a great extent, flourish or decay, according to the influences which encompass the customs and associations which test and affect them. Who shall say how greatly a modification even of the fashions may modify the average morality of the higher classes ? Some very practical philosophy underflows the sublime satire of the prophet Isaiah : " Because the daughters of Zion are haughty, and walk with stretched-forth necks and wanton eyes, walking and mincing as they go, and making a tinkling with their feet : therefore the Lord," the prophet continues, will punish them. " In that day the Lord will take

away the bravery of their tinkling ornaments, and round tires like the moon, the chains and the bracelets, and the mufflers, the bonnets, and the ornaments of the legs, and the headbands, and the tablets, and the earrings. . . . And it shall come to pass, that instead of well-set hair there shall be baldness; and instead of a stomacher a girding of sackcloth; and burning instead of beauty." But if the extravagances of fashion corrupt the rich, and thus bring retributive dismay upon them, a total lack of the means of social decency and domestic and personal delicacy will still more certainly tend to give to the poor that grossness of manners, and that utter degradation of sentiment, with which neither happiness, progress, nor power can ever be rendered compatible. To their moral discipline changes in the fashions of dress can make but little difference; they are, however, beset by temptations of a more repulsive nature and not a less fatal tendency. We, who live in our comfortable houses, find it hard enough to maintain a condition of high moral purity; but what advantages we have in the struggle compared with thousands around us!

For us, the streets, broad built and populous;
 For them, unhealthy corners, garrets dim,
 And cellars where the water-rat may swim!
 For us, green paths refreshed by frequent rain;
 For them, dark alleys, where the dust lies grim.

Why, to say nothing whatever about the necessary loss of delicacy which must happen to people who, without reference [to age or sex, sleep as many as eight or ten in a single room, the depression and lassitude which are the result of such a mode of existence are of themselves enough to crush out the very aspiration to purity. Reduce a woman or a man to the calm resignation of despair, and what will such a state involve? It will involve the enervation, not to say the paralysis, of the moral faculties; and thus not only the inability to resist temptation, but even the total unconsciousness of evil. These considerations should weigh upon all who, to whatsoever denomination they may belong, have devoted themselves to the redemption of human souls. Dr. Chalmers, whose piety made him a philanthropist, once said: "We believe it to be in reserve for society that workmen will at length share more equally than they do at present, with capitalists and proprietors of the soil, in the comforts and even the elegancies of life." That is a hope full of religious consolation to any truly good man's heart. Cowper has described domestic happiness as the

Only bliss
 Of Paradise that has survived the fall.

Paradise will never be regained until domestic happiness is brought

within the reach, and into the very grasp and enjoyment, of all the sons and daughters of men. To secure for the various classes of society this last and perfect boon, much moral and spiritual education will be necessary ; but that education cannot even begin until the living households of our race are provided with decent, healthy, and independent homes.

A CHRISTMAS SONG

COME, help me to raise
 Loud songs to the praise
 Of good old English pleasures ;
 To the Christmas cheer,
 And the foaming beer,
 And the pantry's luscious treasures ;

 To the stout sirloin,
 And the spiced wine,
 The boar's head grimly staring ;
 To the minstrelsy,
 And the good mince-pie,
 To lads and lasses sharing ;

 To the holly and bay,
 In their green array,
 Spread o'er the walls and dishes ;
 To the temperate sup
 Of the hearty cup,
 With its toasted healths and wishes ;

 To the story told,
 By the gossip old,
 O'er the embers dimly glowing ;
 While the hail and sleet
 On the casement beat,
 And the blast is loudly blowing ;

 To the tuneful wait,
 At the mansion-gate,
 Or the glad, sweet voices blending,
 When the carol rose,
 At the midnight close,
 To the sleeper's ear ascending ;

 To all pleasant ways,
 For the ancient days,
 When good folks knew their station ;
 When God was feared,
 And the king revered,
 By the hearts of a grateful nation.

 Come, rich and mean,
 Let's drink to the Queen,
 In a glass of elderberry ;
 Long may she reign,
 Our laws to maintain,
 While we are blithe and merry.

CHARLES F. FULLER.

ETHEL'S BANNER

A CHRISTMAS TALE

CHAPTER I.

HOME.

"It is a circling atmosphere,
Investing all the heart holds dear;
It is a presence undefined,
O'ershadowing the human mind;
A law of strange attractive force,
That holds the feelings in their course."

CONDER.

"How late the boys are to-night, mamma!" said Ethel Golding, returning to the bright fireside after having, for the tenth time, drawn the curtains aside and peeped forth into the cold, starlight night.

"The examination is keeping them, I expect, Ethel; but do not neglect your papa's comforts in impatience for their arrival," and Mrs. Golding glanced smilingly towards the easy chair, which still stood alone and far back from the fire.

"I am very sorry, mamma."

Ethel drew the chair forward into the firelight, and fetched her papa's embroidered slippers, which she placed before it. Then for a few seconds she hovered round the tea-table, re-arranging the dishes of preserves and cakes; but finally she returned to the window, and partially raising one of the heavy curtains, peeped forth.

It was a clear cold night, and frost-wreaths were already forming upon the window-panes—the first sharp winter's frost, and this was the second week in December. The medley of sounds peculiar to a large town greeted Ethel's ears as she listened intently, but no approaching footstep—for this was a secluded street near the outskirts, and inhabited mostly by men who had their places of business in the centre of the town. — Mr. Golding never returned from business until this time, but it was for her brothers Ethel waited so anxiously. The college examination was to-day, and she felt a sister's anxiety to know how they would pass it; for she was proud of her brothers, and, like most other sisters, thought them the best and cleverest in the world.

Ethel was the eldest of the family. Her brother Percy was fifteen, and her junior by one year only, while Bennie was two

years younger than he. There were other children, still in the nursery, however.

A footstep at last broke the stillness—a single one—which Ethel knew must be her father's. She let the curtain fall, and returned to the hearth.

Ethel Golding was tall and slight in stature. Her black hair, parted upon the centre of her brow, and laid smoothly away on either side of her face, whose pure oval this simple style well suited, contrasted with the whiteness of her skin, which only when excited was relieved by any shade of colour. Her eyes were large and grey, shaded by curling black lashes—these could grow humid at some tale of sorrow, or flash like a sudden illumination at the sound of a noble exploit.

At last her eager watching was ended, and the boys came home, looking pale from the fatigues of the day. Percy threw himself full length upon the sofa.

"Papa, what is the use of trying? I declare I have worked like a slave this last week, and, I believe, after all I shall only have the least prize."

Mr. Golding did not answer, but his brow contracted slightly. He turned to his younger son, "How have you succeeded, Bennie?"

"I hope as well as usual—though, as you are aware, papa, we shall not know until the reports are read to-morrow."

"I can tell you, though," exclaimed Percy, eagerly, his eyes glowing with pride in his younger brother. "He will be head boy in his class to-morrow, for he answered every question put to him, and Professor Harley says he is one of the most persevering boys in the whole school, and deserves high honours."

"Is that true, Bennie, my dear boy?" said Mrs. Golding, laying her hand upon his shoulder as he stood upon the hearth.

The colour deepened in the lad's pale cheek, and he looked up with somewhat of Ethel's shyness in his soft, dark eyes.

"I have tried hard, mother, and, I hope, pleased the masters."

Mr. Golding laid his hand upon his young son's head, and spoke a few earnest words of praise. At that same college, in his younger days, he had himself carried off the highest honours, and to see his sons tread in his footsteps was the greatest possible gratification to him.

As yet, however, Percy had given him no pleasure of this kind; though no way wanting in talent, he lacked that steady perseverance that so characterised his younger brother. His indolence, where study was concerned, was a source of trouble to both parents, who, knowing the position he might fill, felt a natural desire to see him occupy it. Boyish sports had a far greater charm for Percy

than books, and he generally spent those hours in the playground that Bennie passed in study. Percy was one of those frank, genial dispositions that would make him a favourite wherever he went, and so he was easily led and influenced by his companions.

"Why have you not succeeded, too, Percy?" Ethel said, in a low, earnest voice, as she leaned over the arm of the sofa.

"I cannot help it, Ethel! I believe I am fated to be nothing but a disgrace to you all!"

Ethel was bitterly disappointed. For the last year she had tried so unremittingly to arouse in Percy the spirit that should command success, and she thought she had succeeded—thought he was beginning to perceive the necessity and nobility of labour.

Mrs. Golding interrupted her meditations by calling them to the tea-table.

It was a cheerful meal, notwithstanding this disappointment, added to the many Percy had already occasioned. He himself was so elated by his brother's success that, with true unselfishness, he related every little incident that would tend to establish it, and Mr. Golding's vexation soon wore away.

"You will go to the distribution of prizes to-morrow, papa, will you not?" Bennie coaxingly asked. "It will be so nice to have you there, and mamma, and Ethel."

"I think of going, my dear boy; but I wish it were to Percy's triumph as well as your own."

Mrs. Golding sighed as she turned her chair from the table, and Percy beat his head in silence.

"It would be a triumph he might rejoice in all his life," continued Mr. Golding, "because it would be the overcoming of habits I fear he will have much cause to regret, and the noblest of all conquests—that of self. It is a solemn thought that we can never have our youth over again. With after-life will come new duties, so that we can never redeem the time mis-spent in our youth."

Mr. Golding rose from the table as he concluded. Percy's breast heaved; he wished—oh! how much—that he could please his father; yet to uproot evil habits that have once gained ground is like tearing a limb from our own body, and Percy, though tender of the failings of others, was equally so of his own—he did not hate them sufficiently to conquer them.

As usual, the next day Bennie, though too young to compete for the highest honours of the college, carried off the first prizes in his class, earning, too, the approbation of the masters, and the praise of the noble earl who presented the prizes, while Percy had nothing to show as the reward of his year's labour.

As soon as dinner was over, Percy slipped away to the nursery

which he knew at this time would be untenanted, as the little ones always went to the dining-room at dessert. The nursery was a large room, with two windows overlooking the street. Now, the fire was smouldering behind the tall guard, and the early twilight of the winter's day made every object in the room indistinct. Percy seated himself at a table under one of the windows, and folding his arms upon it, buried his face in them.

He was not envious of Bennie even now, but he began to be dissatisfied with and to hate himself. His cheeks had glowed at Bennie's praises more than they would have done had the like been lavished upon him; but something haunted him now, had followed him about ever since the adjudication of the prizes, and sat by his side even in the solitude of this room—it was the sorrowful faces of his parents and the blank disappointment of Ethel. He had never thought before what they might and did expect from him as the eldest. When he heard the earl congratulate his father upon the talents of his younger son, he guessed some of the thoughts that had made his parent's face so grave. In thought he went over the past year—the hours and days idled away—lessons missed whenever it was possible—exercises hurried over and badly written—impostures and disguises to cheat the masters, and the punishment that must follow were they discovered. Oh, what a catalogue of wasted time and progressive deceit! Percy saw it, and grieved over it; but how to break through those bad habits he knew not—they had woven round him a chain, seemingly of adamantine firmness. Percy was well-nigh despairing, when a pair of loving arms were twined round his neck.

“Percy, why have you left us all?”

“Can you ask? Oh! Ethel, papa is so displeased with me, and he has good reason to be.”

“But why will you not make us all happy, Percy, by shaking off this idleness, that is unworthy of you, and coming out your own noble self?”

“Idleness! Dear Ethel, you do not know one half. Listen.”

Frankly he told her all, laying bare the plans practised by many of the boys, and which he, too, had made use of, to maintain even the comparatively humble place he held in his class, and which he could not maintain a day without deceit. Ethel was shocked; it was something worse than disappointment in her favourite brother. Idle and indifferent as she had known him to be, she had never thought of this; yet her arm did not stir an inch from its loving resting-place across his shoulders; rather, she drew it the closer, as though to shield him from all deceit henceforth.

“And now, Ethel, if I forswear the cribs and strike out upon the right path of honour and hard labour, do you not see where I

shall be?—put down to the very lowest ranks or expelled the college.”

Ethel's fearlessness of ridicule prompted her to urge him to brave all by an open confession; but intuitively she perceived the sensitiveness with which Percy would shrink from a course of this kind, the acuteness with which he would feel open censure, and her woman's tact prompted her to gain the same end by gentle encouragement, winning him to pursue it through a steady love of the right.

“Why would this be, Percy?”

“Because I have made the masters believe that I know more than I really do, and they have advanced me accordingly.”

Ethel's bewildered look, more plainly than her words, said that she did not understand.

“I would show you, Ethel, but you would hate and despise me. You can love me no longer!”

“Never, Percy—never! I love you the more for your confession. I pity—I am so sorry for you! Do you doubt me?”

She raised her head, her large eyes gleaming through the gathering darkness with a wild, sorrowful light—such a look as one might imagine the recording angel to wear when compelled to note down our misdeeds. Percy's eyes quickly filled with tears that, if Ethel saw, she did not notice in words. He explained to her the use of the cribs at school, and what would be the consequences of a discovery. Ethel was silent, with shaded eyes, for some time after he ceased speaking. At last she raised her head.

“Percy, I have thought of a plan by which you may honourably maintain your position at college, and rapidly rise higher—by which you may redeem your faults, and be spared all reproach—for I will never tell any one what you have told me to-night. It would grieve papa dreadfully did he know. Have you courage for it? It is difficult and laborious, and will take many hours from play.”

“Anything—I could do anything, Ethel, if I might only be spared the shame of public disgrace, and can once more make the name of Percy Golding a honest one. O Ethel, you do not know the wretchedness it has caused me to feel that I was sinking deeper and deeper every day, and with no courage to extricate myself.”

Ethel felt instinctively the pain he was yet destined to endure through that same want of courage and patient perseverance. It seemed almost hopeless to her that he would adopt her plan, or, at least, she knew of the heroic start he would make, and then would come the falling away; for he would soon weary of the plodding from step to step of the ladder he had to climb. For an instant

her head drooped despondingly ; a few moments silent communion with herself, one earnest appeal to that merciful Father ever ready to answer such calls for aid, and she detailed her plan. It was that Percy should study hard during the vacation, and in reality reach that place he had occupied falsely so long. She promised to help him all that she could. Percy threw his arms impulsively round her neck.

"Oh, Ethel, dear sister, how like yourself to undertake so much trouble for my sake ! I *will* be worthy of your love, Ethel ! I will give up all my time to study, and you shall yet have cause to be proud of Percy !"

Ethel's cheek glowed ; Percy had never given vent to so strong a determination before.

"But, Percy, dear, you must mind that disappointment does not daunt you ; look at this sacrifice as a means of making reparation for the past, and remember that is the only way you can atone, and it will be the proof of your sorrow for that past."

As Ethel concluded, Percy's hand silently grasped her own, and for some time the brother and sister sat there, the light from the street-lamps shining in through the windows full upon the raised face of Ethel and Percy's bowed head—bowed in prayer for that future in which he had determined to achieve such great things.

The entrance of nurse, with baby and little Mary, at length disturbed them, and they returned to the circle below.

CHAPTER II.

ETHEL'S DREAM.

"SHE dreams ! through all her hush of night
A breeze of joy floats wild and warm ;
No shadow dims the halo light
That rays her sleeping form,
Where, robed in spotless youth, she lies,
A saint whose soul is in the skies.

"By those pure lips, so silent now,
All solemnly the prayer was said,
And by each living pulse we know
Who watcheth by the bed !
A guardian care is His, and deep,
Who giveth His beloved sleep."

E. L. HARVEY.

WITH Ethel's assistance, Percy arranged his studies the next day with an assiduity that deceived Ethel herself. The earliest hours of each morning found him at his books, and in the evening he submitted his labour for her approval. This continued steadily for a few days ; then Christmas was approaching, and the young people

were invited out to several parties. The first ardour had by this time worn off. Percy, after an evening's enjoyment, felt languid the next day; it was much easier to indulge these feelings than to strive against them; consequently the studies were neglected, and the evenings found Ethel grieving over her brother's want of steady principle.

In imagination she saw the whole of the vacation passed without anything being accomplished, and she dreaded Percy's return to his old habits and companions. She felt that something must be done—but what?

Percy's idle, indifferent habits were entirely overlooked by both his parents in the approach of the festive season, a time in which they could never bear to show displeasure towards their children. Only this watchful sister remained to warn him, who even in her love was not blind to his faults. She could not bear to trouble either her papa or mamma with her fears; they were so much occupied during the day as positively to need the relaxation and enjoyment of the evening.

On Christmas-eve the children were wont to have their party, when a large tree was decked for the occasion. It gave Ethel and her mamma hours of thought and labour to provide the numerous gifts and decorations for the Christmas-tree; happy hours they were to Ethel, full of some of the brightest enjoyment of Christmas time. They visited the shops where the most tempting toys and fancy articles were disposed as if to defy the decorators of Christmas-trees to pass them without buying, and Ethel's exclamations were frequent of—

“Ah, mamma, this would just please Lina Herbert, and I know Fanny Sharman has wanted a music-roll for some time—what a lovely one is this!”

Then there was the unpacking of the parcels at home, where the bon-bons looked so much brighter, and the trinkets more glittering, than when in comparison with the endless variety of the shops.

Then Ethel had secret labours of her own—gifts for papa, mamma, and her brothers, which it required thought to plan and time to execute. —Even so late, though, as two evenings before their guests would assemble her gift for Percy was unthought of. All that evening scarcely another image had chased his from her mind; she wished her gift to be something that should bring forcibly to his mind their conversation in the nursery, and his since forgotten promises, and that should remind him of his desire to tread in that path of light that was constantly mounting upwards. Alas! how many there are who, like Percy Golding, lack the courage and strength to carry out their own ideas of right! We are ready

enough to point out the way we know so well to others ; but how our own footsteps tremble along the path !

It was still with an unsatisfied mind Ethel laid her head upon the pillow. Wearied by the many little tasks that had fallen to her share that day, her eyes quickly closed in forgetfulness. But even in her dreams Percy was with her ; imagination heightened all her hopes and fears, presenting them in fitful, changing lights—now of the present, then of the future.

Now Percy knelt by her side, with his arms thrown round her, and again vowed the same vows he had breathed when the lamp-light streamed upon them in the nursery. Then the scene was changed, and he lay at her feet with despairing sobs and cries ; his deceit had been discovered, and she could do nothing but weep tears, wrung in bitter agony from her wretchedness. With a start and cry Ethel awoke from this dream, her heart beating audibly in the darkness, and her hand throbbing with imaginary terror.

Once more she closed her eyes, but now in soothing slumber. A feeling of calmness and security rested upon her spirit, and she smiled in her sleep. Soft, sweet music sounded in her ears, floating above and around her like the melodious hymning of celestial choirs ; now hovering about her pillow, then, floating into the distance, dying gradually away. Again it swelled louder and louder, in a grand triumphal hymn ; the room was filled with light, and there appeared a countless swarm of angels, their heads of golden hair gleaming radiantly behind each other, only those bright heads and the shadowy hands bearing golden harps being distinct from the mass. The movements of the angel choir ceased with the music, and two of the most radiant figures, in snowy, flowing robes, with folded wings, came forward from the rest, and as Ethel almost ceased to breathe, they unfolded an immense banner, and raising it high upon poles of gold and ivory, the blue silken folds floated out in the air, rising and falling in graceful, sweeping curves, white crystal letters flashing from the azure background. Transparent as gossamer it seemed to Ethel, and so luminous were the letters, that it was long ere she could decipher them. When she did, it was as though the whole choir of angels shouted it forth, " Strive for the right ! " The spirit fingers touched the golden harps, and once more burst forth the triumphant strain that had heralded their approach, the countless pairs of wings were unfolded, and up rose the white-robed messengers, following the shining waves of the silken banner, which was borne aloft before them upwards, until lost to Ethel's sight amongst silvery clouds ; but still the spirit voices sent back the refrain—

" Would'ye learn life's noblest teachings,
Strive for the right ;

Hear the Saviour's soft beseeching,
Strive for the right."

When Ethel awoke the grey light of early morning was creeping through the curtains, and nothing remained but the remembrance of her dream, save the ringing words, "Strive for the right!"

She sprang from her bed lightly, joyously; the long-wished-for idea had come at last, brought by angel messengers in her sleep. It should be a banner and a motto like the one she had seen in her dream that should rouse Percy and stir the very depths of his soul, as it had done hers.

Quickly she dressed; hurrying over all but God's blessing upon her efforts, and upon that day. Then she ransacked her drawers for materials to work out the idea that was in her mind. She found plenty of pale blue silk and crystal beads. By evening she had embroidered a very correct representation of her mystic dream, adding only the trite but true saying, *Labor omnia vincit*.

Ethel contemplated the completion of her work with pleasure; it was a clever embodiment of the angel banner, embroidered by her skilful fingers. Carefully she rolled up the silken folds, and enveloping the whole in white paper, wrote Percy's name upon it with a request that he should not unwrap it until he was alone in his own room.

The next day Ethel was engaged with her mamma in decorating the tree; it was after six o'clock when Percy rapped at her room door.

"Come, Ethel, come, Miss Vanity, what a time you take to dress! Mamma has gone down long ago."

Ethel opened the door; she was quite ready.

"Come in, Master Percy," said the old nurse, who had been assisting Ethel at her toilette; "you must see our young lady before she goes down."

With pardonable pride she drew the cloak from Ethel's shoulders, and stood smiling at Percy's enthusiastic praise.

Ethel's white arms and shoulders gleamed beneath the snowy muslin that covered them; a wreath of holly leaves and scarlet berries rested upon her dark hair, which was woven in heavy plaits round her small head. Ethel was very lovely with that pink tint in her cheek, and the holy sister's love shining in her large eyes.

"You have turned our Ethel into a perfect Christmas fairy, nurse; but come, sister, mamma and papa will think us long."

They descended to the drawing-room, where already some of their young guests had arrived. It was a bright scene that followed; for when the musicians played it was impossible for those buoyant

forms to keep still; dance followed dance until late in the evening, when Mr. and Mrs. Golding stole from the room, and in a few minutes the folding-doors leading into the dining-room were thrown open, and there stood the Christmas tree, its leaves and trinkets blazing with light. It would need a fairy pen to describe such a fairy scene. It did, indeed, appear as though the fairies had had a hand in decking the magic shrub, for each boy and girl found their wishes anticipated, and the very gifts they had longed for labelled with their names.

It was a happy ending to a happy party; and when Ethel Golding laid her head upon her pillow, with bright visions dancing around, indistinctly, in the hazy mist of sleep that weighed her eyelids down, a peal of bells, from a neighbouring church, rang forth a welcome to the Christmas morn; as they rose and fell they sounded like the fairy echoes of dreamland, and Ethel was soon unconscious even of these.

CHAPTER III.

"UNDER THIS STANDARD I CONQUER."

"Take thy banner! may it wave
Proudly o'er the good and brave.

Take thy banner! and beneath
The battle-cloud's encircling wreath,
Guard it!—till our homes are free.
Guard it! *God will prosper thee!*"

SAVE a few words of earnest praise to Ethel, the next morning, Percy took no further notice of her gift; he did not talk of the banner, neither did Ethel.

At first Ethel was disappointed, but when—the vacations over—he returned to college, she noticed a gradually increasing change in her brother. In the evenings Bennie himself was not more perseveringly devoted to his books than Percy, who seldom now indulged in complaints and lazy enjoyment upon the sofa. A remark of one of the servants set Ethel thinking: it was that, if Master Percy took a chamber candle to his room that had not even been lit before, it was sure to be burnt to the very last bit by the next morning. Ethel questioned Percy concerning this; he coloured confusedly for an instant, then taking hold of her arm, he said earnestly:—

"I did not intend you to know, Ethel; do not tell mamma. There is no need for making a fuss; it is only this, that I am determined to make up for lost time. Almost all the holidays were wasted, and now I must use the early mornings; they are very dark at present, but soon they will be lighter."

Ethel turned with an exclamation of sympathy and delight ; but she was alone, Percy had left her as soon as the words were out of his mouth.

Ethel no longer despaired ; her old, happy faith in Percy returned stronger than ever ; she knew what remarkable talents he had if he would only exert them.

Once more Christmas time came round, and the boys returned from the examination, wearied, as usual, with the hard day's trial. Ethel's eager questions were passed lightly over, and in no way did Mr. and Mrs. Golding expect Percy to be more successful than formerly. Bennie coloured when praises were bestowed upon him, and bit his lips to restrain words he was longing to utter ; Percy smiled happily to himself.

After the children had left the drawing-room for the night, Percy drew Ethel into a little room he and Bennie shared as a study, opening from the landing near their chamber. What first attracted Ethel's attention was the waving folds of her banner, fluttering over Percy's writing-table ; from its blue silken background the crystal letters gleamed in the candle light, " Strive for the right ! " Percy's hand was resting lightly on her shoulder.

" Ethel, if I am successful to-morrow, remember that it is to my dear sister and her beautiful reminder that I owe it ; I shall never, never forget what her love has accomplished. I fasten that banner there whenever I come here to study, and its blue folds flutter through my memory whenever I am away ; it has helped me to conquer my indolence, and to be unwearied in my perseverance. I used to wonder what was the use of much study and exertion, but somehow those words, ' Strive for the right,' have sunk into my heart. I think I have found the right, and, with God's help, I will strive for it evermore."

Ethel was strongly affected ; how heartfelt were her silent thanks to God, who had doubly rewarded her endeavours ! Her eyes were full of tears, and more words than the fervent utterance of his name would not come, but Percy's good-night kiss satisfied her that she was understood.

The next morning the boys were off early to college, and later Ethel, too, started with her parents, more eager to witness the distribution of prizes this year than she had ever been before. They passed under the arches of evergreens, and in at the open college portal, where opposite to them the single word, " Welcome," was formed in large letters of dark green holly-leaves. A number of visitors had already assembled in the great hall, where from pendant wreaths streamed banners and mottoes. At one end of the hall rose seats, tier upon tier, covered with scarlet cloth, ending

underneath the gallery that ran round the entire room. These seats were for the young students.

Opposite these seats and behind a table, upon which were arranged the prizes for distribution, were seats for the chairman, the college principal, the examining professors, masters, &c. At the sides and in front of these were seats for the visitors. Ethel and her mamma sat to the right of the presidential chair, commanding a view of the whole of the hall. Ethel, in her impatience, thought the time long until the students filed in two by two, accompanied by their class masters, and took their seats. Then all awaited the arrival of the young Lord B——, who that day was to perform the duty of chairman for his father, the Earl of H——, who was suffering from an attack of the gout. Ethel was only conscious of sharing the expectation of all, when the door behind the president's chair was opened, and a number of gentlemen appeared; amongst the hindmost was her papa. A tall, slight figure stepped forward; the college students rose to their feet and greeted the young chairman with bursts of applause. The noise subsided when Lord B—— sat down, and the dignitaries of the college took their respective seats. The principal of the college then read in clear tones the twelfth chapter of Proverbs, and the words resounded through the silent hall: "Whoso loveth instruction loveth knowledge, but he that hateth reproof is brutish." Then followed prayer.

The reports of the examination were next read by the head master and professors, and as each proceeded, the surprise of Mr. and Mrs. Golding, and the delight of Ethel, could scarcely be contained, for in nearly all the name of Percy Golding received honourable mention; in his class he was first. Ethel glanced towards Percy; he was seated in a far corner of one of the topmost seats, the branch of an evergreen shading his features, which were pale in the extreme. Ethel could guess somewhat of that which was passing through his mind. From Percy her eye wandered to Bennie, whose face was absolutely flashing with a joy he had never exhibited at his own success.

Next came the distribution of the prizes. The names of the boys in a class were called over, then those repeated who claimed prizes. In reply the boys themselves came forward to the little table across which Lord B—— presented the prizes, shaking hands with the recipients. Again and again Percy Golding came down for rewards, until Lord B—— laughingly asked him if he intended to carry off all? The boy had no answering smile; he was very pale, and did not once meet the glance of his parents or sister; he feared that to do so would upset his self-control. It was not easily

he had obtained the honours heaped upon him, and a year's toil, almost slavery, had weakened his nerves.

All the prizes were given now but one, and this was a golden medal, only presented when some especial occasion called for it.

The head master rose, and begged the attention of the chairman and council for a short time; he hoped he could prove that this term the golden medal might be made use of. He then in a few words detailed the particulars of a system of deception that had of late years gained ground in the college. He related many incidents of it, and the corruption of younger boys by older ones, all of which had come under his notice during the last month. As he spoke many heads besides Percy Golding's were bent in silence and shame. Ethel trembled; she remembered what Percy had told her, and a horrid suspicion crossed her mind that these wonderful honours were unfairly obtained.

The head master continued. "Now he had to speak of one young gentleman who, up to this last year, had practised these unlawful means of rising. Since last term he had good reason to state that this young student had abandoned these deceptive tricks, refusing to practise them himself, and by the force of both precept and example endeavoured to inculcate the same honourable principles in the bosoms of his fellow-students. Far from being successful in this, he had only incurred their hatred, and they had neglected no means of showering upon him their scorn and derision. But in spite of taunt and ridicule he had steadfastly pursued his way, never bending one inch to his former companions, nor noticing their insults and neglect." The head master concluded by saying, that he considered such conduct doubly merited the reward for heroism, for it was the highest order of all courage—moral courage.

The approval of Lord B—— and the council was unanimous, and the head master called for Percy Golding to receive the reward he had so hardly won. This unexpected honour was almost more than Percy could bear; his hand trembled like a leaf when the case was placed in it, and as in a dream he heard the few earnest words of commendation Lord B—— bestowed. Percy returned to his seat amid the prolonged applause of all present.

Lord B——'s eloquent address, and the breaking up of the meeting after this, were as a dream to Ethel—her thoughts were full of Percy; but when they were once more assembled in the drawing-room at home, she could not express her delight. There was no further need for restraint on Percy's part, and with eyes full of tears he begged the forgiveness of his parents for all the past years of misconduct; he could hardly bear their unqualified praise, knowing that for one year only he had done his duty.

"And it is all explained now, Percy," said Mrs. Golding,

"why you have so often refused to join in our amusements, denying yourself whole evenings' enjoyment for your books."

"Dear mamma, I am sure you often thought me cross and selfish, but it was my penance to risk even that. I dare not tell you and papa my determination, because I doubted myself too much, and feared I might doubly fall in your opinion. Do you forgive me, dear papa? I promise you it shall be my last secret; you do not know how many times I have been tempted to tell you all."

"You are ten times forgiven, Percy," said Mr. Golding, earnestly, "and may the perseverance and honesty that have been this day confirmed never forsake you! It is the happiest day of my life, for it has proved that I may now put confidence in and trust my eldest son as well as my younger, who must not think himself forsaken." He turned with a smile to Bennie, whose radiant face said plainly it was his happiest day too.

"But, papa," said Percy, quickly, "it is not fair for me to take all the credit, when, in reality, but for some one's patient encouragement I should never have succeeded." Despite Ethel's glance he told them of her persuasive love and the whole history of her Christmas gift. Then he hastened from the room and returned with the fairy banner, which he waved aloft triumphantly. "Look, papa! Last Christmas-eve, when I unfolded the mysterious present alone in my room, I vowed that under this standard I would conquer, and I have—next to God, I bless my dear sister!"

The tears flowed freely from Ethel's eyes in the warm embraces that followed; her own happiness had been sufficient reward, but she had more in the loving approval of her parents.

When the lamp was lit, and the curtains drawn, and the happy group was gathered round the fireside, Ethel related the history of the banner—her singular dream and its embodiment as a Christmas gift for Percy.

When at length they retired Percy begged Ethel to come for a few minutes into the nursery.

The pale moonlight was streaming through the two windows, as the lamplight had done one year ago, and there stood the table and chair as they had done that night. Percy seated himself.

"Now, Ethel, come here." As she knelt by his side he said, with a head reverently bowed, "Oh, Father, I thank Thee for having given me so loving a sister. Strengthen me to walk in the path Thou hast encouraged me to begin, and may I never forget the lessons Thou hast taught me through the happy influence of 'Ethel's Banner!'"

MANOR MELLERAY

CHAPTER XVI.

REMONSTRANCE.

A FEW days after the ball all the guests left Manor Melleray. The Rothesays were accompanied by Miss Challis to Scotland, and it was understood that Arthur was to follow them soon. He had admitted something to that effect to Mr. Rothesay. Letitia said nothing about it to him. She left the matter to her mother, as she knew that she was just as eager as herself for the engagement to be entered upon. It was now October, and the advertisements had been out since May, and no Mr. Casilis had been found. Arthur was making very strenuous exertions for his discovery, or rather having them made, and he had even hinted at the possibility of his going to India himself to prosecute inquiries there, but his mother so earnestly opposed the idea, and her health having begun to fail again, he gave it up, and he sent out competent persons to do so, instead. Sydney knew that her uncle firmly believed his brother dead, and that conviction had taken possession of all their minds at once; and even the young man himself had very little hope of the long-lost Hugh Casilis turning up to claim his property; so that he scarcely expected to be released from the position which he was beginning to feel very irksome, in consequence of his love for Evelyn. Meanwhile he continued unremitting in his exertions to find some trace of the lost one. He put himself in correspondence with persons in every part of India likely to have been visited by Mr. Casilis, and gave much time and consideration to the subject, anxious, if possible, to escape from the engagement, which he now hardly liked to contemplate. He continued to offer large rewards in the advertisements for information likely to bring to light some trace of the missing man. But all in vain. We shall not attempt to describe his vexation, or the inward conflict between his presumed duty and his inclinations. Straightforward and upright as he was, he also desired to do his duty, as a soldier should do.

In the meanwhile, Lady Elizabeth, more concerned that her pet should be saved from unhappiness than that the Rothesays should gain a fine estate, or Miss Challis a handsome husband and great income, resolved to put at once into operation a certain plan of action she had struck out since the ball. First, to try and induce him to go to Spas-Richie and engage himself to



Sydney, and if he was tardy about that, and continued dawdling at Manor Melleray for the sake of his ward's society, she would take the last resource left to her, and part with her little favourite. The Thalbergs were going to France, and she would send her away with them—in fact, she had already spoken to Lady Jennie about it, but saying she was not quite sure yet whether it was feasible or not, purposely leaving the matter unsettled until she should find out whether there would be the necessity for it. It would be very hard for her to part with Evelyn, and she was not able to travel herself, so it would be the last resource. But there should be no delay in adopting it if she failed with Arthur, for beyond all things to be feared was the danger of his discovering how his ward's heart stood affected towards him, as, if he became enlightened on that point, it was possible that he would cast aside every consideration and marry her. It was possible, she thought, but Lady Elizabeth had too much faith in her son to believe it very probable, or that he would not fight against his own inclinations rather than injure Miss Challis so much; but it was best to guard against all chances, as even if he wouldn't take such a decided step as to marry Evelyn out of hand, he might still allow the matter to hang on in the hope of Mr. Casilis turning up, and after another few months' intimacy, with that doubt an excuse for both to believe the necessity of concealing their feelings from each other not a very imperative one, how would either be prepared for what would have to take place then? It would be very unwise—nay, cruel—to permit such a state of things. Matters were quite bad enough as it was; for Evelyn was becoming more absorbed and more pensive every day, and since the guests had left, Arthur had remained at Manor Melleray, and persisted with male selfishness in snatching stray hours of her society, as if thoughtlessly bent on rewarding himself for having to give it up altogether afterwards. The truth was, in spite of what he had said, he was still allowing himself to believe that there might be some escape for him yet, as an excuse for staying there and acting thus. He was wilfully shutting his eyes on everything, heedless as to consequences, so he might remain near the object of his passion. Arthur Levison did not act in the wisest or best manner at this period of his life; but he did not continue this weakness long, so we will let it pass. His mother resolved she would lose no more time about speaking to him. One of two things must be fixed upon—he or Evelyn must leave. She saw the necessity for that whilst the house was full of people, and had attempted to act upon it. How much more necessary was it now that they were thrown so much together!

“Had you any understanding with Miss Challis before she left?” she asked him one day that they were alone together; not

that she needed the information, for she knew perfectly well what the answer would be, but it served to introduce the subject.

"No, there is time enough about that," he replied, looking as if resolved that there *should* be time enough about it, too.

"How so, Arthur? You do not intend, of course, to leave it to the last moment?"

"Not to the last moment; but there is no use in putting my head into the noose sooner than is necessary. It is not so very pleasant that I need be in a hurry about it."

"But more than six months are gone already, and there will be so many arrangements to be made. Then, it does not look very complimentary to Miss Challis to be hoping, as it were, to escape from an union with her, for it certainly has that appearance."

"And naturally," he returned, with a dry smile. "We cannot help appearances, mother; and I believe Miss Challis knows, as well as I do myself, that, if I had my own way, I would marry a very different person."

"But would it not be well, at least, to pay your future wife the respect of proposing for her before the time came in which you could no longer avoid doing so?" said Lady Elizabeth, hastily shearing the conversation away from that point. "You cannot, of course, have any hope of Mr. Casilis presenting himself. His brother would scarcely have made that will if he did not believe him dead; so there can be no advantage gained by waiting. And, really, Arthur, it is not such a very deplorable condition of things. Few young men would object to it, though having fifteen thousand a-year already. Most men would think the addition of twenty thousand to that fifteen a blessing instead of a misfortune."

"And what have you to say for Miss Challis herself, mother?"

"She is very handsome. As to character, I cannot speak, of course; I do not know her sufficiently."

"You would not like her for a daughter-in-law as well as—as Miss Evelyn Dormer, for instance?"

"What need is there to speak of Miss Evelyn Dormer, Arthur?"

"But there is need to speak of her—very great need; she happens to occupy a rather large share of my thoughts just now." And then he looked his mother straight in the face, and she knew that he meant to tell her this thing. She was not surprised, nor was it in her to affect it; so she merely said—

"It is not wise to give way to the thoughts in everything. Do you mean to tell me by that, that you have thought of her in the way that men think of their future wives?"

"It is in such a way that I have thought and do think of her. I did not understand how I felt towards her until I heard that will read, and it opened my eyes. Then I knew that I loved her as I

never loved any one before ; in fact, I never knew the feeling before, and it astonished me."

"But she is little more than a child. Barely a young woman in years, and so childish in manner and mind, it seems almost impossible that you could have any very deep feeling for her."

"She is not too young to excite it," he replied, a warm light coming into his eyes, as if at some recollection ; "her hand has the touch of a woman's hand, and her lashes can droop prettily enough. I have thought it may be folly, but I have sometimes thought she was not indifferent to me. Surely, if I knew it for certain, I would marry her this moment." And then he stood up, and went to the window, and crossed his arms over his broad chest, and stood looking out ; and his mother, glancing up, saw what a fine fellow he was, and thought what a pity it was that he might not have the lady of his choice, and she such a one—her own little pet, whom she loved beyond all others. And she saw, too, the gloom on his dark face, and something more—an almost fierce sternness that alarmed her a little. But she answered with fair composure, for the moment required self-possession—

"No, Arthur, you would do no such thing. If you were convinced this hour that Evelyn was inclined towards you, as you say, you would still marry Miss Challis, for you would know that it was your duty to do so. I cannot believe it possible that my son would even contemplate injuring another so grievously, merely to gratify his own wishes."

"And is that nothing, mother ? Is the happiness of one's whole life, perhaps of another's too, to be of no moment ? What business had her uncle imposing such shackles on me ? Even without my feelings being concerned, I would abhor the marriage, simply because of being forced into it."

"But it was not Miss Challis did it, and it is not fair she should suffer for her uncle's act. Her whole future depends on you—you can make or mar it. Surely you will not allow this passing fancy to interfere with what is so plainly your duty."

"Passing fancy !" he repeated, almost bitterly. "I wish it was ! Mother, will you answer me one question?—but I suppose you won't."

"What is it ?"

"Does Evelyn——"

"No, Arthur, I will answer you no such question. I will have no curiosity on the subject : it would be ill-expended. Impressions at her age are like ripples on water ; so even if you yourself saw anything in her to encourage you, you would not have reason to hope much from that. You have every right to look on her as the future wife of another gentleman, and to allow yourself to take no

interest in her beyond that of a guardian. It is surely given to a strong man like you to overcome this liking for a mere girl, whom you cannot expect to have such a feeling in return."

"And why cannot I expect it?" he asked, fixing his piercing eyes intently on her face. "Mother, you speak very earnestly about it, as if you feared it was possible. It would be easy to satisfy myself by speaking to Evelyn herself."

"And would you do it?"

"Why not?"

"No, Arthur, I cannot believe that you would. It would be downright wicked under the circumstances. You are bound to Miss Challis; and if, tempted by the vain hope of Mr. Casilis appearing during the coming months, you opened your mind to Evelyn, it might raise feelings in her that would be certain to be disappointed, and put the whole tenor of her thoughts out of their usual course. Seeing that she cannot be your wife, it ought to be your object, as her guardian, to allow her mind to continue in all its fresh freedom, undisturbed by such ideas."

"But if I did open my mind to her, as you say, and discovered that she was not indifferent to me, it would be about the most agreeable and delightful thing I could hear. I am so romantic as to say I love her—madly. I believe I loved her the first day—I mean, when I went for her to Mrs. Cunningham's. Of course, before then, that sort of thing was out of the question, and every day that I spend with her makes the suppressing of this more difficult."

"Well, then, to provide against such a thing as that you speak of, I will consent to your Cousin Jennie's proposal, and let Evelyn go with them to France," said Lady Elizabeth, bravely. "Much as I shall miss her, I would be prepared to do a great deal more to prevent that occurring. Nothing could annoy or distress me more."

He came over from the window, and sat down beside her, and took her hand in his.

"I beg your pardon, mother—I would not do anything to distress you for the world; and you may depend upon me that in this matter I will keep a guard over myself. You shall not part with your pet. I know what a sacrifice that would be. Indeed, I do not think she would be easily induced to go; but there will be no need to try. I will go away myself. You will not be sorry to get rid of your son just now."

The tears started to her eyes.

"I will not have you very long with me, Arthur," she said, striving to smile, in spite of her agitation, "but I am used to doing without you. I thought when you returned from India that you

would be with me to the end of my life, and I did build much on that; but we all have to meet disappointment, and to make sacrifices. Without that this world would be too pleasant. I do think you are quite right in resolving to go, but whither?"

"Out in my yacht—or down to Winterhaven's, or, perhaps, I may bring a few fellows to my place in ——shire for the hunting."

"But did you not say to Angus Rothesay that you would follow them to Spas Richie?"

"Well, I believe I did; but that might be at any time."

"Arthur, if you will take my advice you will go now, and, moreover, you will speak to Sydney. Consider how much depends on your marrying her. By not doing so she would be made a beggar absolutely, and you would injure your sister, too. You would not willingly do either of these two things, and what advantage can be gained by postponing the arrangement? By engaging yourself to her at once, you will make the first step towards checking that other attachment, which you know will be your duty once you are married; and would it not be well to have your thoughts more worthy of that ceremony than they are at present?"

"But mother, dear," said he, almost caressingly, "in this matter you must really allow me to judge for myself. As regards Letitia, the thought of her interests would not influence me much one way or the other, I will honestly admit. I would not consider myself called upon to make such a sacrifice as this merely to increase her income; but I want you to be assured that I have no intention whatever of making Miss Challis a beggar. That would be a piece of cruelty of which I do not think I am quite capable. I have spoken, and have thought more than once of throwing every consideration overboard to win my love; but these were moments of strong temptation, and when it would come to the point, I cannot believe that I would do it. At the same time, I am not going to put the halter round my neck sooner than I can help it. I will wait; there is no harm in it, and if Miss Challis will think it uncomplimentary, I cannot help that. She would be a great deal less pleased if I begged to decline the honour of her hand altogether."

"But you cannot have the hope of Mr. Casilis being still alive. He has not been heard of for more than thirty years, and you yourself have ascertained that there is no such name in India at present."

"I have no hope about it, but *I will wait*," said he, with a certain look, which she always knew to express that there would be no changing his present intention. There was a clear, cold, deadly light in his eyes, and a tightening of his mouth, very expressive of determination.

Lady Elizabeth was wise enough to be satisfied with the concession she had already gained, namely, his promise that he would not speak to Evelyn, and that he would go away from Manor Melleray at once. Those had been her chief objects; for, as has been evident, she was more concerned about Evelyn's peace of mind than Mrs. Rothesay's or Miss Challis's interests. These were likely to prosper in the long-run, for, like the others, she believed Mr. Casilis dead, and the assurance Arthur had just given her as regarded Miss Challis was sufficient to convince her that he would really marry her; but if he continued on at Manor Melleray, even with that determination in his mind, neither he nor Evelyn would be benefited thereby, and especially would the latter suffer by such intimacy, probably her peace of mind would be destroyed for ever. Lady Elizabeth belonged to that old-fashioned school which believed in eternal attachments; but for my part I do not think the young lady would have died of a broken heart—that she would be discontented and even very unhappy for a long time afterwards, there is no question.

"Yes, mother, I will wait until March," Arthur said, after a brief pause; "but you need not be uneasy about Evelyn. I see now, as well as you, how necessary it is that I should avoid her, and I will do so; and any time that I come here I will guard myself against saying one word to which you would object. Now, are you not satisfied, my lady mother?" And he stooped his tall form,—for he had risen from his seat, and gone walking the room—to kiss her forehead, not ill pleased to meet her gratified smile. It would seem that he did not think it necessary to say anything about that little conversation which had taken place the night of the ball; and, to be sure, for two reasons, he was well justified in allowing it to lapse from his memory—one being that there was nothing in it that could exactly come under the ban of her disapproval, although it very nearly arrived at that point (that she would certainly think he might have been less free there is no denying; but the question here is not of actions but of words); the other, that as it had happened before his promise was given, his honesty suffered nothing by leaving it in oblivion.

She was very grateful to him, and she showed it in a thousand ways; and when he left them,—which he did in a couple of days after this conversation, she did feel it very hard that she must send her noble son away from her, remembering that those few precious months were all that she would ever have of his society, in its pure, unalloyed state. As the husband of Miss Challis, he could never, never be to her the same. When a son or a brother gets married, the mother or the sister very often lose their faith in him; he is no longer the mother's own special darling—he ceases to be the sister's pride. He belongs to another woman, and she altogether different

—a foreign nature ; and he is so sure to become imbued with her thoughts, her likings and dislikings—her disposition almost. Even where there is not great affection, this is very often the case. Men are so easily ruled, not by each other, but by their wives. It is almost incredible the influence some women gain over their husbands ; and where there is little moral right to it, that influence is often the strongest. It is sad to think of all the good, true men, whose friendship has been withdrawn from those to whom it had been a life-long treasure—whose purposes have been checked, whose views and opinions have been warped and misled, whose very natures have deteriorated, through the pernicious whispers of weak, or cunning, or selfish women.

Lady Elizabeth did not particularly admire Miss Challis, and, like the majority of mothers, she believed her son would be her son no longer, or in a very different sense, when he would be married. And therefore she did tell herself that she was making some sacrifice in sending him away from her. And then came another thought, too, a sad—though not for her a very sad thought. She would not be unwilling to die—she was well prepared for the summons, whenever it would come ; but she well knew what it would be to those two whom she loved best in the world ; and she grieved for them, anticipating the grief they would be sure to feel for her. She knew that her health was not good, and she had some suspicion that she was sinking. Mr. Draper, the doctor, without explaining his reason to her, had begun to call oftener, and she more than once caught Evelyn giving him that silent, piteous, inquiring look, which asks the truth, and yet asks a merciful sentence at the same time. But there was nothing alarming in her state ; and when Arthur was about to leave, Mr. Draper, with that delightful unsatisfactoriness peculiar to doctors, told him, mysteriously, that she was going on as well as might be expected ; and with this information the young man was obliged to content himself, having received a promise from Evelyn that she would often send him news of his mother's health ; he would let her know his whereabouts, accordingly, as he moved from one place to another. And Lady Elizabeth hinted nothing of her suspicion to him,—there was no use making him uncomfortable ; but none the less did she sometimes feel that, in sending him away from her now, she was giving up a portion out of the *actual*, precious *last* time she would ever spend with him. Evelyn never knew of this sacrifice in its entirety, but she knew enough to make her treasure Lady Elizabeth's name, when it had become a memory, with more than a daughter's love and reverence ; and years and years after, it was green in her heart, and the gentle, motherly image fresh to her mind's eye.

There was one other charge Mr. Levison impressed upon his ward before leaving. She was to have nothing to say or do with the people in Radnor-row—her mother, or Mr. Trefanin, or Lia. She was never to go out alone; he would recommend frequent rides, of course, accompanied by the steady old Harris; and that she would avoid walking through the park, as Lady Elizabeth was no longer able to go out, and some of them might force themselves on her notice.

“And I will thank you to let me know, too,” continued Mr. Levison, in a cool, matter-of-fact way, as if he could never be capable of such passionate things as have been recorded of him, “if such an attempt is made, as I would then return at once; and I suppose I may depend on you to remember my directions, and to hold no communication with them?”

“Yes,” said Evelyn, naturally wondering was it the same gentleman speaking now that had startled her with his strange behaviour on the night of the ball; “but if my mother comes here, or if I meet her, I could not, of course, refuse to speak to her.”

“No; I suppose not,” he replied, doubtfully, his own impressions in favour of Mrs. Sandringham somewhat influencing his answer; “but the speaking should be a very brief business. No matter, I will speak to my mother about that.”

Lady Elizabeth was present during this—he never met Evelyn alone now; but it was not then he discussed the question with her. Whatever he said to her afterwards, Lady Elizabeth took care that she never went out about the grounds alone, and Harris received certain instructions as to the rides which precluded the introduction of any stranger into the time allotted to that exercise. It was with some misgiving that Arthur left them, for he distrusted Trefanin; but as he had given his mother that promise, he would not, of course, break it; and as he had told Evelyn, if he heard of his presenting himself, or attempting to gain an interview with her, he would return at once, and the charges he had given Harris provided against any such attempt being made whilst she would be out with him.

CHAPTER XVII.

TREFANIN.

WHEN Eben Trefanin exerted himself to bring about that meeting between Evelyn and her mother, his chief object had been that they might become known to each other with a view to his getting possession of the fortune when Evelyn would have it in her own hands. At twenty-one she would be her own mistress, and mistress of a good sum of money, too; and it was natural to expect that when

she would have learned to love her mother, and would have been made aware of the fact that it had been really hers, she would have no hesitation in making it over to her, and Trefanin knew, or was resolved, that this would be the same as giving it to himself. This was his object, and he succeeded in it so far ; he made them known to each other—he brought them together, and making use of his knowledge of human nature, left it to instinct to speak, which it did. This was a great point gained. Then he had gone to Arthur Levison, but in the piece of bravado he attempted with him he showed some short-sightedness. He had resolved previously to draw conditions from him if possible ; and if not, to leave the fighting out of the battle to Mrs. Sandringham, whom he knew too well to believe that she would readily give up her daughter, and if Evelyn was to live with her, something of course should be done for them ; but the cool contempt with which Arthur treated him enraged his hot nature, and betrayed him into doing what he knew afterwards was a mistake. But this slight failure did not deter him from carrying on his plans. She went to Manor Melleray, as we have seen, and failed in recovering Evelyn ; and when he learned this, he resolved that he would again call on Mr. Levison, and have an explanation with him. He did not know his reasons for refusing any more than she did ; but he guessed that the girl had become endeared to those friends of his, and that they were unwilling to permit her to be intimate with her mother, fearing she might be induced to deprive herself of the fortune for her sake. Then he had another thought, too, but this was not very definite. He would at least have what were Mr. Levison's reasons, and if they touched on that suspicion, he would very soon undeceive him. It was possible, this which he suspected, and to make matters sure, he would draw down the subject, and explain the seeming wrong ; and if it was not that, and if the young man still remained obdurate, it would remain for him to work on Evelyn's affectionate disposition in exciting her pity for her mother ; and perhaps her entreaties would succeed in changing her guardian's resolution. But even if she did not, and if all failed, then would remain that last and surest point,—at the end of four years she would be her own mistress ; and there could be little doubt that she would then live with her mother, and act towards her in all things as he could wish ; and there was even the chance that this would come to pass sooner, for was not Mr. Levison going to be married ? and was not Lady Elizabeth in a bad state of health ? and if the events likely to result from both these positions ensued soon, she would be free to live with whom she chose ; so that above all things it was necessary that this newly-born love between mother and daughter should not be permitted to cool. Mrs. Sandringham was very angry ; but that would soon pass over, and she would

receive Evelyn with open arms, any time they might meet again.

After all, Trefanin's chief object had been, as I have said, to make them known to each other; and Lia's intimacy at Manor Melleray, and his finding her mother having occurred simultaneously, he brought it about at this time, it being most convenient for him. Other matters had brought him to England; he had merely chanced on this little plot, but seeing how he was likely to benefit by it he had followed it up; and with that one exception he had managed well.

And now there remained for him to see Mr. Levison. He called twice, but was refused each time. He hovered about the grounds in the hope of meeting him, but was again and again disappointed. And then at last he learned that he had left Manor Melleray. He still watched, with the object of speaking to Evelyn; but as he was preparing his mind to do so, a sudden change came in his views, and, guided by some motive of his own, he resolved to leave England at once, taking Lia and her mother with him. But this was not so easily done: she refused steadfastly to go.

"I know now what your object was in conniving at that meeting between Evelyn and me," she said, with flashing eyes. "I might have guessed at once that it would be no generous or kindly motive; but I was too much engrossed with her at the time, and gave it no thought. It was with the hope that if he permitted Evelyn to live with me he would allow me some income. Oh, if I had had any idea of this then, I would never have gone there. It was natural that he should refuse when he thought I had such motives. Of course he gave me credit for that."

"You are right in part," said Trefanin. He had not intended to make known his plans to her, for he knew her high spirit would scarcely listen to them, but now that she had hit on this idea, it would be better to tell her the truth. "You are right in saying that I had another object in bringing you together besides the one of pleasing you. When I found you in that lodging, I told you that I had found out a way of helping you, to which you yourself could not object. This is it. The fortune your father gave Colonel Dormer on your wedding-day—" he met her eye steadily as he spoke, and she never flinched under his gaze—"is now in Mr. Levison's hands for your daughter. It is natural I should wish you to get your own. That money is yours, not hers. When you wondered how it was that he had found his way here to recover his ward, I did not tell you that it was I directed him. I called on him that day, told him what had happened, and demanded the fortune. I did not know my man. He rose up like an enraged lion, and swore he would

put me into prison if I did not conduct him to where she was at once. I never met my match before, but the prison was a great back for him. It would not suit me. Knowing that you would not readily give her up, I consented; he promising to say nothing about the prison if I brought him to the right place. But what did he do? He left me in charge of his two fellows, armed with pistols, in the carriage; and when he found the young lady and learned that you were asleep, he came down and told them to set me free. She must not be startled at the sight of armed men, and they were sent home by the train; but he would not let me enter the house until he had taken her away. All very clever! I have often wondered since how I allowed myself to be treated like an infant; but there was something in him there was no resisting. Then I had resolved to humour him. I guessed he was thinking only of recovering her then, and expected that when he would have that done he would give more attention to my plans. It was whilst I was in the carriage that I came to this conclusion. I knew that you would not give her up even thus, and I was right. But you failed. They would not give her to you, and I said I would see him again. I called twice, but he was denied to me each time. Then I learned that he was gone away, and I resolved to write to him, but could not learn his address."

"And when you were doing all this, did it ever occur to you to consider whether I would consent or not? Did you really believe that I would rob Colonel Dormer's child—that I would take *his* money? Yes, it is his money, whatever you may say. It was given him by my father, and it is his. And for Mr. Levison to think that I would be capable of such a thing! Oh, how I have been humiliated!"

"For him to think that you would be anxious to regain your own would be no humiliation. If your father were alive now he would decide so."

"If he were alive—if he were alive," she murmured, dreamily, "I would not be as I am."

Trefanin had reasons of his own for differing from her in that opinion, but he did not say so. It was not his object then to draw down any discussion as to what Mr. Sandringham might or might not do.

"He would at least be glad that you should have your own fortune," he rejoined. "I cannot believe that when the case is properly put before Mr. Levison, he will persist in refusing. He must see that it is only justice."

"And do you mean to speak of it to him again?"

"Of course I do, when I return. I have to leave England now. There is a yellow-bearded fellow over from Paris. One of my friends

has given me notice of his arrival, and I should not like to encounter him. But I expect to be able to return after a few months."

"And then you will bring this matter about again?"

"Yes. Even if I do not succeed, it will come to you in the end, when your daughter will be twenty-one; and I would recommend that, when we return, you should see her, and endeavour to keep up some intimacy. Of course, I know you will not have the motives that I have. It is well that there is some one to look after your right for you." This Trefanin said with a slight sneer, for he saw an expression coming over her face which invariably vexed him.

"When *we* return!—but let that pass," said she, with a queenly gesture. "Hear me once for all. I will never touch a farthing of this money, now, or at any other time. Never! Let him keep it for her: I will not profit by it. More—I give up Evelyn from this moment. If our reunion is to be turned into money, it would be better that we should remain separated. If I had known this before I went there, I would not have gone. I would put the sea between us rather than enable you to rob her. Oh! I can see it all; it was well-schemed. The sister was a tool, the mother was a decoy, to enable the sharper, Trefanin, Schwartz, D'Oreville, and all his other *aliases*, to rob a confiding girl!"

His two heavy brows came together low over his eyes in a terrific frown, and from under them his eyes glittered out with a greenish fire, like a cat's in the dark.

"You forget," he hissed, in a low tone that was almost a whisper, "when you get into that high humour, and speak such things to me, you forget what I might have done—what I might yet do. Could I, Trefanin, the sharper, as you so politely term me, devise no other means of drawing terms from that hot-brained young man than the very honest one I took? Had I no friends to help me in securing possession of a well-endowed young lady? Have I had so little practice as not to be able to gain my point without any help from you? I regret it now—the silly, sheepish, almost sentimental course I took. It was no wonder that I should fail—that I should make such a mistake as that one of walking into the lion's jaws in the way I did. I was out of my element in doing the romantic. I had said that you would be pleased in meeting your daughter, and I caused you to meet. This is the thanks I get. But I would recommend you to think twice before you oppose me. I can take more unpleasant means to get hold of the girl."

"Before you used that threat you should have suppressed the information that you have to leave England," she rejoined, courageously, but she had blanched slightly at his first words. "Your evil practices are hunting you out. Take care: will you ever return

to England, Eben Trefanin? There is an end to everything, and there will some time be an end to such wickedness as yours. This French detective coming here at the present moment—no doubt on the track of you and your vile associates—looks providential. You have to give up your plot. Heaven grant you may never be able to attempt it again!”

“Yes, I can brave you now,” she resumed, after a pause of a few moments, during which they had stared almost fiercely into each other’s eyes. “My son is a soldier—you yourself have ascertained that. He is in the Queen’s service. He is out of your reach, and I have no longer any fear for him. Little as I like his entering on such a life at his age—my poor Ralph a drummer!—it is a hundred times better than that he should run the danger of being seduced by you to adopt your abominable trade. And now you have to leave England, and *at once*; I know the old signs—the shifting, uneasy glances, the starting at every sound. In your heart you fear that the Nemesis may be here at any moment; and before another day dawns, you will have left this house, probably for ever. If you imagine that I will do as you propose, and follow you, with Lia, to take up the old life at Homburg, or any of the other places, you are very much mistaken. I tell you honestly, before you go, that I will not do it!”

“You will not stand to that, Edith,” said he, his whole manner changing, and taking a silky, plausible, frowning tone. “You have not the reason that you had before, for, as you say, Ralph is safe from me, and you will give up your daughter. I can do nothing for you, then, if you remain here—and would you return to the miserable poverty in which I found you?”

“Yes. Oh! a hundred times preferable will it be to living with you, or *through* you. I cannot bear it. With every morsel I would remember in what manner it had been acquired, and it would stick in my throat. It grew unendurable as time went on. I believe, without even the motive touching Ralph, I would have done as I did. Since I came here it has been stealing over me again, and I had just begun to think how I could escape from it. You subdued me by threatening him, and now you have no longer that hold over me.”

“And do you mean to say that you will defy me—that you will persist in remaining here, instead of taking your daughter to Homburg, as I desire?” He was still speaking in a quiet, calm manner, but his eyes were lowered, and his tone suppressed, both charged with scorching lightning, as it were. “Think over it again, Edith”—still in the same silky voice; “remember I cannot take Lia with me—that would endanger my own safety; but, as you do not love her, and her presence irks you, I will be willing to place

her in Madame Barry's care. Indeed, she is becoming a little troublesome to myself. I brought her to England for a certain purpose, and she did her part well. Now I have no use for her, and I will put her in a safe place, for her disposition is likely to get her into mischief. You will think about it, Edith?" he asked then.

"No." She spoke the word firmly, although she saw the storm gathering. She knew the meaning of that lowered glance, for it was not the first time she had encountered it, but still spoke bravely. "All is over between you and me, Eben Trefanin. I thought *that* before, but I was foiled. Now, however, you are powerless to change my determination. All is over between us. We were an ill-assorted pair. You blasted my life in its very commencement, but I am not going to speak of that now. If yours had been at all worthy, I could have forgiven it. Women can forgive worse things than what you did; and I could, perhaps, in time have learnt to love you. But it was as impossible for you to change your nature as it was for me to descend to its level. I say this in no pride, Heaven knows: I have little reason to be proud. All I want to say is, that what little union has been between us is now at an end. You may do what you like, but you will not break my will in this."

"We shall see—we shall see;" and now he was up close to her, his eyes blazing like red-hot coals, his teeth bared and gleaming. "You defy me, you say. Repeat it—do you defy me?"

"I do."

"Then——!" and he swore a fearful oath—"you shall suffer for it—you, and all belonging to you! As you could take advantage of this fix I am in, I will have no mercy with you! Do you think I will be baulked? Do you think I will leave this house without crushing your proud spirit? What mad folly to speak in this way to me! You ought to have known me better, fool! But you spoke without thought—you were in a passion, eh? You forgot that I was half-Hindoo, half-demon, did you? Listen! I will give you an hour——"

"You needn't. Nothing will change me," she interrupted, with white face and white lips, but still resolute glance.

"I will give you an hour," he continued, compressing her arm, which he had grasped so tightly that through sheer pain she uttered a faint little cry. "I have more mercy for you than you have for yourself. Think over it. Revenge is sweet. I'll come back here in a few months, and find out your son and your daughter. A soldier's coat won't save him from a stab in the dark from a foreign stiletto, if his mother wills it; nor can that haughty gentleman—confound him!—be able to screen your fair daughter from a worse fate. Ha! you flinch now! You will consider what I have said, and change

your mind, Madame Trefanin! But if you don't, you may say your prayers—my patience won't stand it!" and then, with a fierce, threatening gesture, he left the room, locking the door after him.

She *had* flinched. She knew he would keep his word. The brave spirit gave way when her children were threatened: until then she had held firm. For herself she did not care. She was desperate. She had nothing more to live for. Son and daughter lost, her life was wrecked: it was not so much courage that had inspired her words, but some dreary feeling, not far from despair. But when he came to speak of her children, she trembled at the thought of their having such a bloodhound on their trail. Then she flinched, then she gave way. No word escaped her lips, but if he had asked her then, she would obey him, she would have said "yes." But he did not: he left her to solitude, and the companionship of her own dreary thoughts. He was in a fearful fume at the moment, and he was wise in going away before his passion became too much for him; for he saw that his words had taken effect, and he wanted to win her to consent—not to injure her.

When left alone, she sat herself down on the sofa in that little room where she had met Evelyn. She sat down, her eyes drearily vacant, her face pale and dragged, and clasped her hands on her lap.

"Why should *I* mind?" she murmured, the words half escaping through her white lips, and she kept slowly clasping and unclasping the long white fingers in each other, "what am I that I should be particular? There never was anyone so unfortunate or desolate. All, all missing from the beginning! Yes, I will yield to him—it does not matter. Such as I ought to have no feelings. Oh, I was born under an evil influence; everything went wrong with me from the first: what does it matter that it should continue to be so? If I opposed him now, he would follow my poor children—at least I know that I will save them by sacrificing myself. Ah, great God, how hard it has been—all, all from the very first the burden was heavy. If I could only die, if I could only die!" She wrung her hands piteously. "No I never could do it, I was tempted once before—that dreadful day when—oh, let me not think of it! It was strong then on me to attempt my own life, but I could not do it. The faith within me is too strong. I suppose if I were a little mad with this feeling I could do it at once, but to face Him, and my own life on my hands, it would be too dreadful. I must have patience—hope is past for ever. Nothing can happen to me now, but to go from bad to worse. If he made me like himself, I should not wonder. It is easy for the fortunate and happy to be good. Content with oneself, and with all the world, creates gratitude, and that brings good feelings, and sends the mind looking upwards; but when there is great misery we are angry with everything,

embittered, discontented, and we want to revenge ourselves on something or other for our being so unhappy."

Before long she stood up, and went pacing the room, as was usual with her when disturbed. She did not mind the flight of time; it might have been minutes or it might have been hours. She was in that state of mental prostration when a sort of stupor takes possession of the senses, numbing the very consciousness of one's own misery; and when this, the result of an extremity of grief comes, it instantaneously brings a certain relief. There is nothing more to be lost, nothing more to be hoped or wished for; like a person lost on a dead level plain, stretching miles away in every direction, it does not matter to which side he turns, it must lead him to something better—to some outlet; he could not be worse off than he is. Mrs. Sandringham had undergone many trials of late—the parting with her son, the disappointment about Evelyn, and this, her having to submit herself once more to a man whom she despised heartily, and to live on his wicked gains. She would much rather, as she had said, return to the dreary poverty in which she had been before that meeting with Evelyn. She had entered upon it of her own accord, and was used to it. Moreover, it would keep her near her son; but life with Eben Trefanin was intolerable. All her life had been one series of sacrifices, and for the sake of those two she must submit to it. Oh, why had she not died years ago, she asked herself over and over again, when she was a little child, and before all the terrible things happened which had made shipwreck of her womanhood? Then she would have been at peace all these years, instead of knocking about the world, the companion of an evil man, discontented with herself, miserably unhappy always. It never had ceased; it had been so from the beginning, and was it to continue so unto the end? For awhile she had indeed allowed herself a sort of reprieve, had taken pleasure in watching the growth of Ralph, and had even felt some interest in Lia, until her unfortunate disposition began to repel her. She had permitted herself to be deceived by Trefanin—he did at one time attempt to keep his manner of life a secret from her—in the hope that he might mend his ways. But that did not last long; suspicion, distrust, abhorrence, came on in succession; and then flight. She fled from him, as she would from anything evil, to save her beautiful boy. And their life in London had been, though poor, not altogether without pleasure in it. How willingly she would go back to it, if only she might have Ralph, and be rid of Trefanin!

As the shadows of that mild October evening began to lengthen along the floor, she stopped and looked out at the lovely little garden. It was hard to believe that she was in London then, so still and quiet everything seemed, and she there all alone, pos-

sessed by her great trouble. There were no flowers visible, nothing but dead leaves, and withered plants, and spectral firs, waving against the opposite wall. But the sky was softly tinted opal and blue, and over the chimney-tops, towards the west, a deep golden wave of light was visible, and to it her eye turned. It gave her a strange, new feeling of—not hope, but something akin to it. “A thing of beauty is a joy for ever.” A beautiful sight causes pleasurable emotions; and, whilst looking at it, it is not easy to return to one’s trouble, whatever it may be. She did not remove her eyes from that one streak of brightness for some few minutes, and it brought thoughts of places and persons long past—dead, lost, faded away into a sad memory; it recalled things she would fain forget; for although they had a sweetness which softened her into tears, the relapse into her former state of mind would be the more bitter because of them.

Suddenly there came a commotion in the house, the hasty ascending of steps, the banging of a door, and then all was silent. But before she had ceased wondering what could be the meaning of it, and what could have prevented Trefanin from returning, for the hour had surely elapsed, those hasty movements began again, and did not cease for some few minutes. When they did, at length, the silence seemed greater than before, and she laid herself down, with a weary sigh, upon the sofa, not caring a great deal what happened, or when he would return. The brightness faded out of the west, and a sombre grey overspread the sky. And then the shadows grew longer and longer, and night came slowly on. With her eyes fixed on the window of a house beyond the wall of the garden, she began to wonder who lived there? what was their condition? were they happy or unhappy? did they think this world a very weary business, as she thought it? This speculation drew her out of herself, as the bright sky had done before. But soon the window lost its distinctness, and then the house itself, and, lastly, the naked wall became clothed in deep shadow, and the firs no longer showed gloomily against its bleak whiteness. The corners of the apartment gathered a dusky gloom about them, and the darkness spread until it made a circle of the space that lay between where she sat and the window, where the only remnant of twilight lingered. But that was diminishing, too, and soon all would be night. There was no promise of the moon making her appearance, and scarcely a star was visible, but heavy, mysterious masses collected together, and went rolling along the dark heavens, as if there would be rain before morning.

She did not rise up or attempt to open the door. It was a matter of profound indifference to her whether she would be set free or not. She sat on, her eyes on the ground, for there was

nothing to draw them out of doors now, thinking—thinking. But her brain grew weary with all that thinking, and her eyes closed at length, and her head sank back on the arm of the sofa. Angels had waved their wings over her troubled spirit, and lulled it into sleep.

She did not know how long she had slept, but she woke up with a start. Some one was beside her. It was Berks, the old woman who minded the house for the landlord, and, with the assistance of the maid of-all-work, attended to the lodgers. She had been surprised at the door being locked—it was not usually so; and having entered, found her in a very uncomfortable position, asleep. It was late, past ten o'clock, and Mr. Trefanin and his daughter had left the house hours before. "They got some sort of a start," Mrs. Berks said, "and went off in a great hurry." And shortly after some people called to inquire about him, but as they seemed to have no great goodwill for him, and he had been a good lodger, she had allowed her taciturn disposition to appear, and refrained from information in her power—namely, that there was a lady in the house who might know of his whereabouts. So they went away, and Mr. Trefanin had not returned, and that was all she could tell. And without making any remark thereupon, Mrs. Sandringham rose, and took the candle from the woman, and went slowly upstairs to her room.

The following morning she was in a less depressed state of mind. She had had a good night's rest, and rose refreshed. With the morning's light, and the consciousness of freedom, came back her courage. The mere fact of his absence was a thing to rejoice about. She knew the meaning of it: the French officers had nearly pounced upon him. Perhaps they had caught him afterwards, and he was even now in custody. The thought did not give her much trouble: she could not concern herself about him. It was to Ralph her thoughts flew; they fluttered about him like bees about a flower. Was it not still possible that she might stay near him? Oh! if she only might entertain the thought! *He* was gone, and Heaven knows when he would dare to return. Those frightful threats of his lost their terror in that fresh morning light, and when he was no longer there to enforce them by look and voice. She could hope, she could pray.—It would be easy to warn Mr. Levison about Evelyn; and as to Ralph—oh, surely, surely, bad as he was, he would not dare to harm her darling boy. In this free, safe, light-of-day England such things could not be done. She would not believe that it would be given to him to compass his wicked threat. Yes; she would brave it; she would not go to Homburg; she would stay in London, and return to her former occupation, and find out Ralph. Something, at least, of their

previous life might be resumed. Even though he were a soldier, she would see him often, and be at liberty to advise and (sweet business for a mother!) watch over him. It brought the light back to her eyes, this blessed thought. She could not give it up; she would brave all, and stay.

And no sooner had this resolution become fixed in her mind than she felt as if it had been very foolish to be dismayed by Trefanin's threats. She ought to have had more faith in Providence. He would not be permitted to put them into execution; the very fact of his having to fly from England at the present moment was a proof of this. At the moment of defeat, blinded with rage, furious with disappointment, he could swear to do terrible things, which in calmer moods he would not have the audacity to attempt. And then there was time—he would not venture to return soon—and when he would become engrossed in his perilous pursuits, he might even forget his anger altogether, or show it in a milder form when opportunity offered. He could not keep alive that brutal rage that possessed him last evening. He must cool. Possibly when he would return it would be to find her; and after long deliberation she decided that it would be best not to be out of his way. She would have the courage to meet him even after doing this, and if he repeated his threats, in default of anything better, she would yield to him then.

Having decided thus, and as she could not afford to stay in Radnor-row, she resolved to go back to Mrs. Caper. Indeed, it would be a relief to get out of this house. She had not known a peaceful moment in it, except when she held Evelyn in her arms, and heard her whisper "mother;" that was happiness; but what a brief dream it was!

The first enthusiasm past, Evelyn had gone back to her friends. She loved them better; nor could she blame her for it now. It was natural. But she had Ralph still, and now she was all anxiety to be in search of him. When old Berks was called up and questioned, she admitted that Mr. Trefanin had paid the rent in advance, but there was still something due—a mere trifle. Small as it was, however, Mrs. Sandringham could not pay it. She had only ten shillings in her purse, and that was not half the amount; besides she would require it for her first wants. But there were some possessions of his and Lia's left in the house, and she asked her if they would satisfy her demand. Yes, they would more than satisfy it; but on second thoughts, Mrs. Sandringham gave her eight out of the ten shillings, promising to pay her the remainder and directing her to keep the things for their owners, and as security that she would make good her word. This matter being arranged, and having collected her own few articles of wearing apparel in a small carpet

bag, she left the house and paid a cabman sixpence to take her to Mrs. Caper's poor domicile. Thus she returned to that former life, with exactly eighteenpence in her pocket. And, strange coincidence! —on that same day an English vessel arrived in port, freighted with passengers from India, and amongst those who stepped on land was Lord Cheney, Baron of the British Empire and formerly known as Colone Dormer, of —th Dragoons.

CHAPTER XVIII.

STRUGGLES.

“RALPH, Ralph, Ralph!” and she fell upon his neck, kissing him passionately. He had often called at Mrs. Caper's to know if she had heard from her, and a few days after she arrived there, he came again.

“Though you told me I was to give you up, I could not stay away, mother,” he said, when, after the first raptures of her delight at meeting him were over, they were seated side by side. “My feet used to bring me here without my will, and then when I'd come I would ask Mrs. Caper if she had heard anything about you; but she had not; and then I'd go away with such a heavy heart. I didn't know what to do with myself. If I could only known where you were, and that you were happy, I think I would have been satisfied; but feeling so lonely, and uncertain, and anxious, I fell to thinking all sorts of things, and neglected my work. I got stupid and used to forget things, and at last Mr. Rawson dismissed me. It was when that happened that I knew you wouldn't like the way I had been getting on, and that you would have expected me to bear up better; and I was sorry that I didn't; but that was no use then. I was dismissed. There were twelve shillings coming to me, and I lived on that whilst I was looking for employment. It was a weary time, mother; I was disappointed so often. I got into one place, but I didn't like it, and left it.”

“Why, Ralph?”

“I didn't like the fellows I was with. They used to say wicked things, and curse; and when they'd leave at night, instead of going home, they used to go to a public-house and they wanted me to go too. They called me a sneak and a spy, and I don't know how many other things; and I was beginning to think I ought to go with them, when I remembered that you would not like it, and so I ran away.”

“That was right, darling!” and she pressed his hand encouragingly.

"I went back afterwards to tell my master that I couldn't stop. Four shillings were coming to me, but he only gave me half-a-crown, as he said he would stop one shilling and sixpence for leaving without notice. I was glad to get any at all. All the other money was spent. I was stopping with another boy in a lodging in Joyce-street, and I owed a week's rent. The woman was very kind to me, and she said it would do at any time. She had a son that I reminded her of, and he was gone away to the West Indies, and I believe she used to be kind to me for his sake."

"God bless her!" Mrs. Sandringham murmured softly.

"But I was resolved to pay her for all that," continued Ralph, manfully. "I wouldn't have been so short in money, I believe, only that I lent the other—Bob Sadler was his name—half-a-crown one time that he was hard up, and though I asked him for it once or twice, for I wanted to scrape together what would pay the landlady, he never gave it to me. I wouldn't mind for myself about food and that, a pennyworth of bread used to do me, but I wanted to pay her. She was so kind to me, mother, and she was poor, too. I think the poor are more charitable to each other than the rich are to the poor. She used to take me into her little parlour at night, and give me a cup of nice tea and some bread-and-butter, and she gave me a present of a little Bible, and told me it would keep me from harm. That was when I was going away after I had enlisted. It was Bob Sadler advised me to it. He had enlisted himself, and he said it was jolly to be a soldier, and that I would have a shilling a day, and could pay Mrs. Wells by degrees. But he was almost a young man, and I, being only a boy still, could not be a regular soldier. I was too young, so they made me a drummer. Oh, I was so proud of it—of being a soldier, mother. I wonder I never thought of it until he spoke of it. I think I must have been meant for it all along. Don't you think so, mother? It's grand! And they are such jolly fellows, the best in the world; and in a few years more I'll be a sergeant, like Sergeant Stokes."

"Yes, Ralph," said she, hastily, "but, tell me, did you pay Mrs. Wells?"

She would not admit it to herself, but she did feel that she was not prepared just then to listen to him aspiring to be a sergeant, like Sergeant Stokes. It would come, she knew, when she should listen patiently to these things, but as yet it caused her a nameless pang; and yet had she not good reason to be thankful for the way things had turned out? She was not ungrateful; but, nevertheless, she could not help thinking of what might have been.

"I did, mother," said Ralph, unconscious of the tumult of feeling his simple words had raised in her breast. "I gave her a few pence a week until I had it all paid. She was refusing to

take it at first, but I made her, for I knew she was poor, and I thought it would be too bad for a strong fellow like me to go sponging on a poor old woman that was working hard to live."

"And you were right, my boy—quite right; never take advantage of the goodwill of the helpless if you can help it. And now let me look at my soldier laddie. I never thought to see you in this uniform, Ralph."

"But don't you like it, mother?" he asked, looking anxiously into her face, and he rose and drew himself up proudly, and unbuckled his belt and buckled it up again, and looked down at his feet, and then at her again, and was thoughtlessly happy when he saw her gazing at him admiringly.

"Why you are quite a man in it, Ralph," she exclaimed. "It makes a great change in you; it seems ever so long ago since that time you and I were living here together. I shall have to be consulting you now," she added, pleasantly, "instead of advising you. I feel that I have some one to protect me now. And it is a really handsome uniform, white and green, and becomes my brave son. I am glad you like your companions, Ralph. Are they good to you, and what is this about Sergeant Stokes?" She was resolved to become used to the idea as quickly as possible.

And then Ralph launched into all his boy's talk about his new life, his companions, his hopes of future fame and renown; she listening with her tender smile, putting in an encouraging word now and then. She did not like the profession he had chosen—that is, she did not like it for him at his age; but at the present she was thankful that he had entered upon it, as it secured him from Trefanin's influence. She seemed to think there was only one danger in the world for her son, and that was Trefanin. It was better, perhaps, that he should have become a soldier than to continue wandering about the streets seeking employment, and liable to fall into his hands at any moment; but now that she was at liberty to have him with her again, it *was* a little disappointing that this might not be so. However, according to her custom, she compelled herself to like it when it was inevitable, and listened to his cheery prattle, taking an interest in the rules and regulations, in the different characteristics of the men with whom he had to do, which Ralph touched off with a few words, adding a little encomium to those whom he had already taken a liking to, and in the experiences, and adventures, and long military life of Sergeant Stokes, who seemed already to have become a fast friend of the boy; describing to him the service he had seen, and the battles he had fought in; and invariably taking his part whenever occasion required. She interested herself in all these things, knowing that they would become part and parcel of her life henceforth. If it was his busi-

ness to go down into a mine, and work there until his skin became a coat of dried, black leather, with the coal filling up the pores, penetrating to the veins, she would have banished out of her mind every thought but that which concerned a collier's existence, and would have taken no earthly interest in any spot beyond the dark, dreary, gloomy den, where he would have the name of living like other human beings, but actually enduring his life, and by degrees ridding himself of his soul, and dropping down into a sort of upper-class brute creature. A soldier's life was better than that, it was better than a great many things. In other times, under other circumstances, she would have chosen it for him,—ay—beyond all others; and nothing would have rejoiced her more than to see him carrying the colours of some gallant regiment of foot; for a soldier's blood was in his veins, and she hoped and believed that a soldier's heart beat in his breast. In that far past she had ridden forth from the Government House at the side of a handsome colonel of dragoons, and dashed along the line of his troop, her heart thrilling with rapture, as she saw how every eye brightened, and every bronzed cheek glowed, at the appearance of their young commander. "The hero of a hundred fights," she used to whisper to herself with a young girl's ardour, gloating over his fresh laurels; and before Evelyn was born she used to beguile herself with dreaming that her child would be a boy, and would have his father's soul in him, and that she would be the mother of a soldier. She was the mother of a soldier now, and yet not half thankful for that. But it was so different; she dared not allow herself to think *how* different, for fear the enormity of her loss, and the depth to which she had fallen, would dismay her too much. It was not the change in her circumstances she deplored. I have written to little purpose if I have not shown that she could brave a great deal for any object dear to her heart—no, it was a change of a far other meaning, a loss the bare thought of which often made her cry out with bitterness, "O Lord! O Lord! Thy hand hath been strong upon me; for having lifted me up, Thou hast cast me down."

She wanted Ralph now altogether to herself, as she had had him before, and now here he was separated from her, belonging to the Queen, to his regiment, to his officers—to everything but her. Then he might have got on, and pushed himself into a better state, if he had not taken this step; but as a private soldier he could never rise any higher than a non-commissioned officer; and low as had been their condition, and unpromising their prospects, in her heart of hearts she had had an ambition for him—not anything definite, to be sure, but with a mother's fond faith she had allowed herself to believe that he would do great things, make a respectable name for himself, and a standing amongst honest men. But at least he was

amongst honest men now,—which would not be the case if in Mr. Trefanin's company,—and brave and true ones, too, no doubt; and the more she thought of it, the more contented she grew that he had chosen the military profession as his, and became a soldier laddie, as she had said. And so she listened, with that sweet, gracious smile of hers, and drew him on to tell her everything of his habits and duties, down to the minutest particulars, and asked questions about the men, calling them by their names, and already felt quite a warm friendship for Sergeant Stokes.

“And now, mother, what do you mean to do?” asked Ralph, when, having exhausted all subjects connected with his new manner of life, it occurred to him that she had scarcely said anything as yet about herself. The young are naturally selfish. Accustomed always to see every other interest give way to theirs, they unconsciously come to think that they are first in importance; and especially in the case of a doating mother like his, who had always held herself of secondary moment, and made his welfare her chief care, it was natural that, from long custom, he should come to take her view, and permit himself to receive the first attention in all matters. But Ralph was not selfish, or, if he was, it was an unconscious selfishness which her great love had planted in him. He loved his mother too tenderly not to value her happiness far more than his own, though this might not be so in outward seeming.

“To work, Ralph, as I did before,” she replied, in a cheerful tone, “and to have you coming to see me every day, and telling me everything that happens to you. I believe you would almost want to keep a diary, I shall be demanding so much news of you.”

“Oh! I'll tell you lots, never fear; but, mother, it will be hard on you, that eternal stitching, and now when you won't have me. If you were only out of this place, it would be something. Wouldn't you like a little cottage just outside the city. It would be very nice, mother, dear.”

“But there are a great many reasons against it,” she replied, smiling. “I would be too far from you, and too far from the house I work for. Then I am afraid the resources would scarcely keep pace with the expenses. I have only myself to depend on, you know, and a cottage outside of town would be rather an expensive pleasure.”

“Oh! mother, I wish I was a man, that I could do something for you! It's too bad, your having to work so hard, and no one to help you.”

“You will be a man some time, Ralph, and a good and honest man, too, I hope. I know my brave boy will keep at a distance from evil companions, and will remember that he has a mother who looks to him for all comfort, and who prays for him night and day.”

"Yes, mother, that I will; and, see, won't I do my duty, too! But I say, mother, I am rather sorry now that I enlisted. You see, I didn't know that you would be coming back to this sort of thing. If I had known that," he added, reflectively, "I wouldn't have done it."

"But it cannot be helped now, Ralph, and you'll find I'll get on very well. It is the most foolish thing of all to regret anything we have done, especially when it is past mending. Of course, I do not mean when we have done anything wicked, as we should be always sorry for that. An evil act is a blot on this fair creation, and a direct insult against God. But in this matter of becoming a soldier, I do not think you should regret it. Perhaps if we had spoken about it beforehand, I might not have advised you to it; but, since it is done, regretting it would only make you discontented, and you could neither be happy nor very good with that feeling."

"But I cannot help being sorry that you should be all alone, mother, for all that. You have only me, and it is right that I should be working for you, which I can't do now. And do you remember how we used to talk of going to live in the country, and of course that cannot be now. I like being a soldier right well, if I had only myself. There's nothing I'd like better, and I think if I was ordered away to some place where there was war, I'd distinguish myself so that you would be proud of me."

"Yes, Ralph, I am sure of that," she replied, bravely, although the thought of his being sent away to "some place where there was war" struck her with a sudden chill; but she would not, for the world, damp his ardour by the expression of any womanly terrors. "I know you'd do your duty, and that is the chief thing required of a soldier. I heard a gentleman—he was an officer—say once that he would prefer one man who would simply do his duty, neither more nor less, to ten who would rush into the mouths of the enemy's cannon contrary to or without orders. But there are many occasions when a man may distinguish himself and do his duty at the same time. If there weren't, there would never have been heroes in the world; and I am sure you would not be backward if such an occasion offered."

"Mother, I think I wouldn't," said he, his cheek flushing with pride and ardour, "and I wish I was ordered off to where there would be active service. There is nothing like it, Sergeant Stokes says. He was in I don't know how many battles, and won a lot of medals, and was mentioned by his officers several times with distinction, and was a very famous man. It's not himself told me all that, but some of his comrades. And he says that sometimes, when forcing a breach, or attacking a superior party, the blood would be

dancing in his veins with delight. I suppose I'll see something of that, mother, when I am a man. They can't keep me always here. Some of the fellows think we may be ordered to China before long, but, of course, they cannot know. Stokes didn't like the Chinese at all. The nastiest set that ever was—they kill the little children, and hate us (our men out there, you know), and their country, too, is not as nice as others. But, of course, we cannot tell where we may be sent to, and wherever it is we must be satisfied, but I hope it won't be China."

"Indeed I hope not, Ralph," said his mother, fervently.

"But if it were, mother, we should be satisfied, and do our duty; a soldier has no will of his own, but must obey those over him. I wish I was a commander-in-chief," said Ralph, suddenly, and drawing a smile from his mother at the magnitude of his ambition. "Not but that I may be one yet," he added, standing up and straightening himself, and taking another satisfactory view of his own person in its bright uniform, "more unlikely things have happened. Don't you think so, mother? There was"—but as Ralph was about to launch into a review of all the heroes who had risen from the ranks, and distinguished themselves in the several armies of Europe, and build on it visions of future fame for himself, a very different thought occurred to his mind, and his face became overclouded; "but I say, mother, there's that other point—what are you to do without me? Whatever you may say, I know you'll miss me."

"Not when you will come and see me every day," she replied. "You remember you used to be absent the greater part of the day before, so that it can make very little difference."

"It's not that I mean so much as that I should be working for you, and not have you working for yourself. You won't tell me it isn't my duty, for you know it is. I wish I knew—hallo, I have it! I'll tell you what I'll do, mother: I'll save up as much as I can, and buy myself out in a few years. It can't be much."

She shook her head. "A great deal more than you can compass, Ralph, I am sure; but what is the good of thinking of that? If I find it hard to do without you, I will tell you, and we might consider it; perhaps between us we could save up what would do it if we saw the necessity; but I do not expect that there will be any. I have not been able to get much work yet, to be sure; but it won't be so, and you'll see I'll get on very well. And now you must promise me that you will not be troubling your head about this, or thinking about leaving the army. I know you would not like that."

"No, mother," said Ralph, candidly, and with a certain firmness not often perceptible in his manner; "I shouldn't like it,

Now that I have become a soldier, I should like to continue one; but if I see that you are in want of me, or that you are working too much, I must do something—although I don't know what," he added, with a perplexed look; "the buying out would take a long time, I know, and they wouldn't discharge me for the asking. I wish I had never——"

"Hush, darling!" and she put her finger on his lips, kissing his forehead at the same time. "If you talk like this, I must send you away from me. You will not speak of it again, Ralph, if you love me; I could not bear to think you should regret it, and especially for my sake. I have no want for you in life. You see, you compel me to tell you what a useless personage you are," and she laughed a loud silvery laugh, so rare with her that he looked round at her in surprise, and the gloom disappeared from his face, and he was smiling happily. Ralph's smile was not confined to his mouth—it irradiated his whole face, making it look bright, and cheery, and handsome, but alas, so ingenuous. His whole soul spoke out through those open honest eyes, and proclaimed to the world its incapacity for concealment of any kind.

"Well, mother, I'll do anything you like, and think according to order too," said he, gaily, "if you'll only let me have that laugh, often. It struck me that you were happy, somehow."

"And I *am* happy, dear—happy in you. I was miserable before I came here, for more things than one; but now that I have been speaking to you, and know how it is with you, and know what a son I have, I feel that things might have been much worse, and that I ought to be grateful. When you told me about that poor Mrs. Wells, and about Sergeant Stokes and your other comrades being so good to you, I saw that it is not such a bad world, after all. And there is Mrs. Caper has taken my work when it was finished to the house, and got more for me, and is altogether very civil."

It was perhaps a little exaggerated, for she wanted to banish that uneasiness out of his mind, but she was contented nevertheless. The simple fact of those people amongst whom he was thrown having treated the boy well reassured her greatly about him, and the more she thought over it, the more rejoiced she was at having escaped Trefanin. She had not as yet succeeded in getting much work to do. Other people had received the employment that was wont to be hers, and it was only by the most pathetic entreaties on Mrs. Caper's part that she prevailed on the proprietor of the establishment, or whoever arranged these matters for him, to give her a small share "just to keep the poor lady from starving," as Mrs. Caper movingly said. But that would not do, she must try to get employment at some other place, and this was the hardest thing on her; the asking, and explaining, and staring, and rebuffs,

and all manner of unpleasantnesses attendant on a poor needle-woman's vocation, were peculiarly trying to her. But she went through it all bravely, and at last, after a great deal of difficulty, she succeeded in getting a little work—very little, for the people did not know her, and could not, of course, trust her, as they very plainly gave her to understand. It was just enough to keep her from starving, but she did not tell Ralph this. Things would improve, she hoped, and it was at least well she had no one to support but herself. But she had to postpone paying old Berks until her prospects would brighten.

They were very tedious in that enlivening process, however. She used to take the shirts—or whatever it would be—home according as she would have them finished, expecting to get some more, and sometimes there would not be any for her. It was a dull season, and there was not much doing, or others had got it, or some fault would be found, and with some grumbling the money paid, more than once a little stopped by way of punishment for those weary, delicate fingers not having the accuracy of a sewing-machine. And she would have to drag her weary limbs home through the crowded slushy streets—no more cabs, that last sixpence was a foolish spending, she said—and sit down in her miserable lodging, with a single candle enlivening the shabby furniture and bare floor and unpapered walls, and with her cup of weak tea and thin slice of bread before her untasted, think forebodingly that she had no employment for the morrow, and very little money too. But she still bore up. She went back to the house next day, and succeeded in procuring a little, and worked hard; so she had it finished that night, eating nothing in the meantime, for it was possible that the shopman would find fault and refuse to pay immediately, or stop some again, and in that case what little money she had would be requisite for the supper and for the next day's single meal. But some good luck softened his flinty heart, for he stopped nothing, and, moreover, gave Mrs. Caper a rather large share of work to be finished in three days, and to be paid for on delivery, which the good woman carried home rejoicingly, for now, at least, her lady lodger would have a week without anxiety. But there was only money enough for the next day, and Mrs. Sandringham had no provision for the two following, perhaps for the other three too, for who knew what humour the man would be in then? Here, again, however, Mrs. Caper came to her aid; she would lend her a few pence to provide for the two days, and she herself would take back the articles to the Rhadamanthus of the drapery establishment, and exert herself to induce him to pay at once. She was a better subject for browbeating than her lodger. And when the work was finished she did so, but not only was it

found fault with, but payment was refused "until it was convenient." Mrs. Caper argued, entreated, and at last stormed and abused, until she got herself turned out. The money was thrust into her hand, and she was told never to show her face there again, and, moreover, that her lodger would get no more employment in that house. With a sad heart she went home, and told her of what had happened, blaming herself. But Mrs. Sandringham would not permit that. "You have been a good friend to me," she said, "and you could not have foreseen that he would be so hasty. It is not such a bad business. They were very unsatisfactory there, and one could not be sure when they would pay or when they wouldn't. To-morrow I will go and try my luck at some other place, and in the meantime, you see, I have money enough for three days; perhaps, with a good deal of economy, I could make it do for six."

But now, more than ever, Mrs. Caper considered it her duty to perform that unpleasant part of her work for her, and she did so, and, as may be supposed, made more strenuous exertions than ever; and, as is generally the case where energy is displayed, she succeeded, not merely so far as to procure a little work, but the promise of more if that was satisfactory. She was known in the place to which she had gone, her son having once been in employment there. She was sorry she had not thought of going in it first. But they were in a small way, and Mrs. Sandringham could not be always sure of work from them, so that her circumstances continued to fluctuate.

It was in this manner that matters went with her for some time, but towards Ralph she always showed a smiling exterior now. He did not know that his mother was suffering. Mrs. Caper, however, at last thought it her duty to enlighten him, although she knew very well it was little he could do. "But at least he ought to know," she said to herself. "Coming in and tearing upstairs, and bursting into the little room where she sat quiet and sad, and at her work, and then rattling away at all sorts of nonsense, little guessing the load she was carrying, or that absolute hunger was gnawing at her heartstrings." Mrs. Caper was fond enough of Ralph, a brave, handsome lad she thought him, but she deemed it only right that some one should help her lonely lodger to carry her burden. And so she told him that his mother was in a very bad way indeed, work hard to be got, and badly paid for, and that not seldom she went on one meal a day.

Ralph was in despair. What was he to do, poor fellow, a drummer-boy? Oh, why did he ever enlist? He regretted it bitterly now.

"There is no use, mother—I must speak of it!" he burst out

with, after Mrs. Caper told him this, the tears actually standing in his eyes; "it's too bad, the state you are in. What can I do? I wish you would tell me, mother, what I could do? I'd do anything to help you! I'd run away this minute—ay, desert—if it would help you! Oh, I wish I had some money! I don't know how much I'd want, but I suppose not more than twenty or thirty pounds, and then I'd soon be free!"

"But you haven't it, Ralph, darling, and there is no chance of getting it, and we must be contented. I am not so bad off at all. I suppose Mrs. Caper has been fancying things, and telling them to you as facts."

"She has been telling me the truth, mother, and nothing else. I don't know what bewitched me to enlist; I wish I had never done it; I'll not stop being sorry for it all my life! Mother, can I do anything to help you? For mercy's sake, tell me! It's too bad that you should have to endure so much. I wish I knew—no! yes!" He stopped silent for a minute, then suddenly seized his soldier's cap, and hurried up to her. "Good-bye, mother! I am going. Oh, you needn't think it's anything desperate; I am only going to consult Sergeant Stokes. He knows a lot of people, and he might be able to help you—to get you employment, I mean. Don't stop me, mother—don't object! He is a nice old fellow, and the best-natured in the world, and I know he'll do something, if he can; and if he can't, it would cheer you up to be talking to him. I may bring him to you, mayn't I? You'll see you'll like him. Eh, mother, mayn't I bring him here?"

"Yes, dear, if you like it," she said, with a faint effort at a smile. But when he was gone, she shook her head and sighed at his hope of this stranger being able to help her. Youth is so sanguine and so credulous. Ralph believed that his friend could do anything, and that he would surely help his mother, and she had not the heart to damp that hope. He had been so distressed at the thought of her poverty—and, indeed, it was not well that Mrs. Caper should have told him; she would have kept her trouble to herself, and would have died before she revealed it to him. But officious friends, in their zeal to help us, often do the very thing we like least; and now that the mischief was done, it was not worth speaking of; so Mrs. Caper never learned that she had annoyed, instead of serving, her uncomplaining lodger.

Mrs. Sandringham had little hope that Ralph's friend could do anything for her, and she did not quite like meeting him. Not that, remembering her former position, she was too proud to know a sergeant, and too proud to blush at her circumstances; but she shrank from meeting any one just then, for her spirits were at their lowest ebb. She consented because she could not refuse Ralph

anything; and once that was done, after her usual practice she reconciled herself to the thought of it, and waited tranquilly, next morning, her work in her hand, for Sergeant Stokes to make his appearance. Ralph had said he would bring him in the course of that day; but about noon he burst into the room alone.

"Oh, it's all right, mother, and he'll come in an hour! He thought it right that I should come first to tell you that he thinks he can do something—at least, he'll try; and he said you might like better to hear it from me than from him. It was nice of him, now, wasn't it? He says he knows you are a lady—how did he find that out?—and he's very glad he's coming to see you—not because you are a lady, but because you are my mother. He has taken quite a liking to me, and be sure he'll do it if he can. But I didn't tell you yet what it is. There's his sister has got a situation in a gentleman's house—he's a lord something or other—and she is to be the housekeeper; and Stokes says, as the house is doing up, preparing for the lord, there'll be a great lot of work to be done—linen things, you know—and he'll get his sister to give them to you."

"But those things are not usually done by such as I, Ralph," said his mother, smiling softly at his volubility; "there are establishments to furnish them."

"But he says he is sure she'll stretch a point to oblige him, and she is to have the management of everything; and there'll be no great hurry either, as there's no mistress; so that she can give you what will keep you in work for a long time;—isn't that grand, mother, and won't you cheer up now? You'll find you'll have lots to do, and won't be poor any more! He's gone to her now, to ask her, and then he'll come here; and I know he'll have good news; he wouldn't have spoken of it if he wasn't sure. This lord—I forget his name—is come home from India lately, where he was all his life, and he doesn't know anything about English houses or servants, and is leaving everything to her and Lady Eastlawn. I suppose I should have put the lady first: it was *she* recommended Stokes's sister, Mrs. Carnegie, to him. She lived with Lady Eastlawn for a great many years, and she's very fond of her. Stokes was often in her house; it's in that grand, fashionable quarter they call the West-end, and the lord's new house is there, too. And, to be sure, you'll have a long way to go, but when you'll have plenty of work, mother, you won't mind about taking a cab now and then."

When the honest sergeant came, he made good Ralph's promises. He entered the shabby little room, hat in hand, his face very red from having walked quickly all the way from the West-end, and his stubbly grey hair standing up from his forehead in a

very alarming fashion. He was between fifty and sixty years of age, of middle height, stoutly built, and healthy and strong withal. Though the features were irregular and strongly marked, his face was intelligent-looking, and pervaded by a genial good-humour which relieved its extreme plainness. At his entrance, Mrs. Sandringham rose from her seat, and swept towards him with all her native grace, her hand outstretched, her face lit up with a witching smile. But before Sergeant Stokes took the offered hand, he stopped short, looked at her with profound amazement, which he made great efforts to conceal—it was a mingling of admiration of her beauty and incredulity at the idea of her being Ralph's mother—then he bowed low, and said, "Your servant, ma'am," and then he took her hand respectfully, feeling as if he were saluting a being of another sphere.

"I am so glad to see you," Mrs. Sandringham said, in her low, musical voice, through which a certain tone of feeling ran. She was prepossessed in his favour at first sight, and her words spoke exactly what she felt. "I have so much to thank you for. Ralph speaks of you very often: you have been such a good friend; and indeed, I am very grateful."

"It is nothing, ma'am," said the sergeant, bowing again, and then taking the chair to which she had motioned him. "All the fellows are fond of Ralph. There's not a better nor more promising lad in the service, though it's before his face I say it," and then he turned round, and gave Ralph a smiling nod. "He is a fine fellow, ma'am; you may well be proud of him; but, there, I won't say any more before his face; I see he's blushing. I am blunt, but he knows well I don't mean to flatter him."

"He has a very high opinion of you, at all events," said Mrs. Sandringham, smiling, well-pleased at the praise. "Sergeant Stokes is quite an old acquaintance of mine already, as well as being a very good friend to my son. I cannot help thanking you again for all your kindness to him."

This quite put the poor sergeant out, and he hastened to change the subject. After some little difficulty as to how he could venture to draw down the matter to such as her—it seemed as if it would be an insult to speak of employment to her, and yet there was her work on the table beside her—he began with—

"I suppose Ralph has told you, ma'am—yes, I see; and that I would go to my sister, which I am after doing. She is quite willing, and would be glad to see you to-morrow, if convenient, and will do what she can to—to—to oblige you—meaning in the way of—of—" here the sergeant, completely at a loss, jerked his arm awkwardly towards the table, and gulped out, "of that sort of thing, ma'am. It's not exactly the way she intended——"

"I hope I shall not be putting her to any inconvenience," said Mrs. Sandringham. I should be very sorry to do that, sergeant," and she smiled as she used the familiar term, which came very piquantly and naturally from her lips.

"Oh no, ma'am, not at all; and I am sure it wasn't that I meant. I hope you wouldn't believe that I'd be trying to make a compliment of it. She'll be only too happy that you'll do the things for her"—(perhaps Mrs. Carnegie would not have been quite so ready to endorse that opinion; for however willing she might be to oblige her brother, she certainly believed, and naturally, too, that she was conferring no slight favour on the person he had recommended to her patronage); "and hopes you won't distress yourself, for there's no hurry. What I wanted to say was, that she would like it if—but I suppose I had better leave it to herself; and if you could call to-morrow at one o'clock—she appointed that hour, although I was afraid it might not suit you."

"Indeed it will; I am too thankful to get the work to neglect attending at the hour she has named. I shall be there punctually, sergeant; but I do not think—perhaps it escaped me—but what is the address."

"No, ma'am, I didn't tell it to you. How stupid of me! But I suppose I couldn't have gone without. Here it is; I got her to write it on a bit of paper, as I wasn't sure that my head would keep it. The house is finished, and she's there. The cabinet-makers, and house-decorators, and all the rest of them, are gone away, and Lord Cheney's will remove into it next week. He is staying at Lady Eastlawn's at present; she's a great friend of his, Jane says—my sister, ma'am," explained Stokes, "and it was she selected all the colours, and settled how every room was to be furnished; and I believe, indeed, it was she chose the house itself before he came home at all. Lord Cheney's was in India, ma'am, and was a great soldier, and we'll have him coming some day to look at our men, for he is in the Horseguards now."

THE ATTEMPTED SETTLEMENT OF FRENCH PROTESTANT REFUGEES IN RODRIGUEZ

IN the end of the seventeenth century, when the Protestants of France were compelled to flee in great numbers from their own country, a singular attempt was made by some of them to form a settlement in the island of Rodriguez. Rodriguez is now inhabited and cultivated, and is a dependency of the British colony of Mauritius, but was then uninhabited. It is an island about fifteen miles long by six broad, lying more than three hundred miles eastward from Mauritius, in the Indian Ocean. The history of the French Protestant expedition to Rodriguez, written by the leader of it, Francis Leguat, "a gentleman of Bresse," was published soon after his return to Europe.* It is very interesting, both from the extraordinary character of the expedition itself, and from the account which it contains of the natural productions of the countries visited. The projector of the expedition was the Marquis du Quesne, a French refugee residing in Holland, who obtained for it the countenance of the States-General and of the directors of the Dutch East India Company. He fitted out two vessels, intending to take possession of the "Isle of Mascaregue," that is, the Isle of Bourbon, or Reunion, "in case there were no French there," and if this could not be accomplished, of the Isle of Rodriguez; but when all things were ready for the sailing of the ships, information was received that the French, who had formerly taken possession of Bourbon, had sent a squadron of seven men-of-war thither. The intended colonists, therefore, disembarked, the Marquis being afraid to expose them to the dangers with which their projected settlement now appeared to be attended. But a few of them were still bent on carrying out their design, and a small vessel being fitted out by the Marquis du Quesne, sailed from Amsterdam on the 10th July, 1690. She was named the "Swallow," carried six guns, was manned by ten seamen, and carried as passengers ten adventurers, mostly very young men, who seem not so much to have entertained the hope of preparing a place for a larger colony, as to have cherished a romantic notion of living by themselves in a pleasant isle, far from the cares and troubles of the world. Their imagination seems to have been not a little wrought upon by the name,

* A New Voyage to the East Indies, by Francis Leguat and his Companions; containing their Adventures in Two Desert Islands, and an Account of the Most Remarkable things in Maurice Island, Batavia, at the Cape of Good Hope, the Island of St. Helena, and other Places in their way to and from the Desert Isles. Adorned with Maps and Figures: London, 1708.

Isle of Eden, which an early voyager had given to the Isle of Bourbon, and by glowing descriptions of its scenery, productions, and climate. They chose for their chief the eldest of their number, Francis Leguat, whose conduct, if we may judge of it from his own simple narrative, seems to have fully justified their choice.

The voyage was tedious, as all voyages were at that time, and it was not till the 25th of April, 1691, that the little vessel reached the island of Rodriguez; the adventurers meanwhile having experienced many hardships and trials. They joyfully landed, and after fifteen days the "Swallow" left them. Leguat gives a very interesting description of their little settlement, the houses or huts which they erected for themselves, and the gardens which they made. They had carried with them a supply of provisions, and of such things as they supposed to be needful; but found the island so fruitful, and its productions so various and good, that they had no difficulty in supplying all the ordinary and simple wants of life. Ere long, however, as might have been anticipated, they began to become weary of their solitude; and at last Leguat alone was willing to remain in the island, nor could he, as he confesses, think with pleasure of living there all the rest of his days. The younger men longed for female society, and felt that they had done wrong in condemning themselves to perpetual celibacy. Their Eden was without an Eve. Their gardening and other occupations did not afford them the delight which they had expected; hunting and fishing were so easy that there was little pleasure in them; and notwithstanding an occasional game "at chess, at trictrac, at drafts, at bowls, and at scales," and the additional amusement of teaching parrots to speak, life was dull. It is not wonderful, therefore, that the settlers in Rodriguez, despairing of being visited by any ship, spent the last year of their residence on the island in building a rude bark, in which, after great perils, they succeeded in reaching Mauritius, where, after all, they were barbarously treated by the Dutch Governor. Their residence in Rodriguez extended to little more than two years; they sailed from it on 21st May, 1693. Instead of following Leguat's account of their fortunes after they left that island, let us turn to his description of the island itself and its productions. Of the beauty of the scenery, the hills and valleys, the multitude of clear and sparkling streams, the woods, the fruits and flowers, the salubrious and pleasant climate, he speaks with enthusiasm; but the most interesting information which his book contains is that relative to the animals of the island, and particularly the solitaire, a bird which is not known to have ever visited anywhere else than in this small island, and is now unhappily extinct. Bones of it are preserved in the British Museum, and in the Andersonian Museum in Glasgow; rude figures of it are also given

in Leguat's work,* and our further knowledge of it is chiefly derived from his description. His is the only description of the living bird.

"Of all the birds of the island the most remarkable is that which goes by the name of the *Solitary*, because 'tis very seldom seen in company, though there are abundance of them. The feathers of the males are of a brown-grey colour. The feet and beak are like a turkey's, but a little more crooked. They have scarce any tail, but their hind part, covered with feathers, is roundish, like the crupper of a horse. They are taller than turkeys. Their neck is straight, and a little taller in proportion than a turkey's, when it lifts up its head. Its eye is black and lively, and its head without comb or cop. They never fly; their wings are too little to support the weight of their bodies; they serve only to beat themselves and flutter when they call one another. They will whirl about for twenty or thirty times together on the same side during the space of four or five minutes. The motion of their wings makes then a noise very like that of a rattle, and one may hear it two hundred paces off. The bone of their wing grows greater towards the extremity, and forms a little round mass under the feathers as big as a musket-ball. That and its beak are the chief defence of this bird. 'Tis very hard to catch it in the woods, but easy in open places, because we run much faster than they, and sometimes we approach them without much trouble. From March to September they are extremely fat, and taste admirably well, especially while they are young. Some of the males weigh forty-five pounds.

"The females are wonderfully beautiful—some fair, some brown. I call them fair because they are of the colour of fair hair. They have a sort of peak, like a widow's, upon their breasts, which is of a dun colour. No one feather is straggling from the other all over their bodies, they being very careful to adjust themselves, and make them all even with their beaks. The feathers on their thighs are round, like shells, at the end, and, being there very thick, have an agreeable effect. They have two risings on their craws, and the feathers are whiter there than the rest, which livelyly represents the fine neck of a beautiful woman. They walk with so much stateliness and good grace, that one cannot help admiring and loving them, by which means their fine mien often saves their lives.

"Though these birds will sometimes very familiarly come up near enough to one, when we do not run after them, yet they will never grow tame. As soon as they are caught, they shed tears without crying, and refuse all manner of sustenance till they die.

"We find in the gizzards of both male and female a brown stone of the bigness of a hen's egg. 'Tis somewhat rough, flat on one side, and round on the other, heavy and hard. We believe this stone was there when they were hatched, for let them be never so young, you meet with it always.

* The figure of the *solitaire*, from Leguat's plate, is given, on a reduced scale, in "Chambers's Encyclopædia," article *solitaire*. A small figure appears in a kind of landscape which forms Leguat's frontispiece, and several interspersed among the trees in "Plan of the Settlement."

They have never but one of them, and besides, the passage from the craw to the gizzard is so narrow, that a like mass of half the bigness could not pass. It served to whet our knives better than any other stone whatsoever.

"When these birds build their nests, they choose a clean place, gather together some palm-leaves for that purpose, and heap them up a foot and a half high from the ground, on which they sit. They never lay but one egg, which is much bigger than that of a goose. The male and female both cover it in their turns, and the young is not hatched till at seven weeks end. All the while they are sitting upon it, or are bringing up their young one, which is not able to provide for itself for several months, they will not suffer any other bird of their species to come within two hundred yards round of the place; but, what is very singular, the males will never drive away the females, only, when he perceives one, he makes a noise with his wings to call the female, and she drives the unwelcome stranger away, not leaving it till it is without her bounds. The female does the same as to the males, whom she leaves to the male, and he drives them away. We have observed this several times, and I affirm it to be true.

"The combats between them on this occasion last sometimes pretty long, because the stranger only turns about, and does not fly directly from the nest. However, the others do not forsake it till they have driven it out of their limits. After these birds have raised their young one, and left it to itself, they are always together, which the other birds are not, and though they happen to mingle with other birds of the same species, these two companions never disunite. We have often remarked that, some days after the young one leaves the nest, a company of thirty or forty brings another young one to it, and the new-fledged bird, with its father and mother joining with the band, march to some bye-place. We frequently followed them, and found that afterwards the old ones went each their way, alone or in couples, and left the two young ones together, which we called a marriage."

It is extremely interesting to have such an account of a bird now as completely extinct as those which left their³ footprints unreckoned ages since on the soft strata that have now hardened into stone. What would not naturalists give for a similar account of the habits of the mammoth, or of any of the creatures which are known to us only by their remains! The solitaire probably became extinct soon after the island of Rodriguez was settled by colonists. Its flesh was good, it was very easily captured; and from what Leguat tells us of the single egg, the seven weeks' incubation, and the long attention required by the young, the destruction of the whole race in such a limited sphere is likely to have been very soon effected. It belonged to the same family with the Dods, which also recently existed in the islands of Bourbon and Mauritius, and which has now in like manner perished. It was a short-winged bird, in-

capable of flight, and did not possess that great power of running which belongs to the ostrich, and which will probably long enable it to maintain its place in its native deserts.

It may be observed, in Leguat's account of the solitaire, that it does not appear to have much dreaded the approach of man. This, however, may be regarded not as a peculiarity of the bird, but as a consequence of its being unaccustomed to man's presence, and, therefore, unapprehensive of danger. Nothing is more remarkable in Leguat's narrative than the statements he makes on this point concerning the animals of Rodriguez in general. Of birds which he calls wood-hens, and which he describes as being "fat all the year round, and of a most delicate taste," he tells us that "if you offer them anything that's red, they are so angry that they will fly at you to catch it out of your hand, and in the heat of the combat we had an opportunity to take them with ease." The bitterns, also, which were abundant, and "as big and good as capons," were even more familiar and more easily caught than the wood-hens. The pigeons were so tame that Leguat says, "we have had fifty about our table to pick up the melon seeds which we threw them." He adds, "they never missed attending at our meals, and we called them our chickens." The only land mammals found in the island were bats and rats. The latter, whether they were aboriginal, or had landed at some time from a ship, to form a colony of their own, were very plentiful, and very troublesome. The manatee or lamantine, or sea-cow—one of the few herbivorous cetaceans—abounded in the sea, feeding on the sea-weeds in shallow water. "It feeds in herds, like sheep," Leguat says, "about three or four feet under water; and when we came among them did not fly, so that we might take what we would of them, by either shooting them or falling upon them, two or three at a time upon one, without arms, and pulling it ashore by main force. We sometimes found three or four hundred together feeding on the weeds at the bottom of the water, and they are so far from being wild that they would often let us handle them to feel which was fattest. We put a rope about its tail, and so hauled it ashore. We never took the greatest of them, because we could not master them so easily, and they might perhaps have mastered us; besides, their flesh is not so delicate as that of the little ones.— Their lard is firm and excellent; nobody that ever saw and tasted the flesh, took it for anything but butcher's meat." The French adventurers in Rodriguez had certainly no reason to complain of any difficulty in procuring food. Land and sea were equally bountiful to them. In pools left by the tide, there was often a contest of fish for the bait, as of minnows in a stream, and a sufficient number could be caught in a very short time. "Land-turtles," or tortoises, were extremely numerous.

"Sometimes you see two or three thousand of them in a flock ; so that one may go above a hundred paces on their backs, or, to speak more properly, on their *carapaces*, without setting foot on the ground. They meet together in the evening in shady places, and lie so close that one would think those places were paved with them." The flesh of these tortoises is described as being delicious and wholesome. They attain a large size. "I have seen one," Leguat says, "that weighed one hundred pounds."

Leguat describes land-crabs as one of the plagues of the island. "They tore up our plants in our gardens day and night, and if we shut up the plants in a sort of cage, in hopes of saving them, if they were not far off, they would dig underground from their burrows to the plants, and tear them up under the cage. . . . When one approaches it, it presently retires, but when we throw stones after it, 'twill always run after the stones, by which it is easily struck. 'Tis dangerous venturing to be pinched by it. . . . A little before the full moons in July and August, these crabs march by millions from all parts of the island to the sea. We never met with one but what was laden with eggs. We might then have destroyed great quantities of them with ease, for they go in prodigious troops, and being far from their burrows, have no place of retreat. We have sometimes killed above three thousand in an evening with sticks, yet we could not perceive the next day that their number had greatly diminished."

We have not attempted to give any account of Leguat's work further than as it relates to the island of Rodriguez, and the remarkable settlement attempted there by him and his companions. It may be mentioned, however, that its notices of subjects of natural history which came under the author's observation during his voyage, and in the different countries which he visited, are numerous and interesting. If his style is quaint and simple, it is animated, and he shows himself to have been a keen observer. His work is now valuable chiefly for his description of the solitaire, but the paragraphs which he devotes to many other animals may even yet be read with pleasure, and at the time when he wrote, the information contained in them must have been in great part new.

THE FEN COUNTRY

ON the eastern part of England lies a marshy district, possessing historical importance, but of no ordinary interest to the general tourist. The level of the Fens is greatest in Lincolnshire, and runs through many of the midland and south-eastern counties of England; it embraces nearly the whole of Lincolnshire, the northern part of Cambridgeshire, besides a great part of the counties of Bedfordshire, Huntingdon, Norfolk, Nottingham, and Suffolk. From one end to the other is a distance of about seventy miles in its widest places, and nearly forty feet broad—the total area covered by it amounting to 1,060 square miles, or 680,000 acres. Across this vast district of country, with little interval, over dark morass, inhabited by densest of fogs by day, and the ever-twinkling, delusive will-'o-the-wisps by night; on profitless waste lands, where reeds and grasses thickly grow and are ever burning; over treacherous soils of peat, soft clays, and gravel-beds, unbearable to man and beast; now and then enlivened by some lofty castle or church-tower, standing erect, with grey turreted walls, in strange contrast with the low flats, or some lofty eminence or high-land overlooking in dismay the level plains beneath,—over this large tract does this undulating Fenland stretch, a terror to the inhabitants around, a source of evil omen to the crops and the lands. In its vicinity, in the higher table-lands, are green patches of cultivated land, like oases in the midst of this dark, ungenial, desert land. As we look from the plains of the great level—a vast waste, and void of cultivation—to its neighbouring land of richer and more fruitful soil, we cannot but feel that this effect must be produced by some of the wonderful changes of nature; by some great geological convulsion, changing the fruitful soil into one of dearth and barrenness; by some mighty throe of the sea, which has played at football with mountains, and raised them from their level; which has laid out the plain as a grand tableaux, and separated by impassable waterproof shells the waters of the ocean from those of the sea.

The district is divided into two parts: that nearest the sea is called the marshland, as distinct from the inland parts, known as the Fens; the marshy soil is composed of small particles of sand, mud, and clay, finely mixed together—the Fenland being nothing but a long line of peat and bog. It is our intention to see how these great changes in the earth's surface were brought about; what mighty forces of nature were brought into action, that moves the dry land as it were its playthings, and lifts it to the caprice of its

own moods and turns; and also to notice the effect that man's ingenuity has had upon the forces of nature, to stop its undeviating force, and keep her under subjection and restraint.

Premising that the soil of the Fens appears to be alluvial—that is, deposited by the action of water at irregular periods—we notice that the bed or bottom of the “great bay,” as it has been called, is composed of a thick layer of sand and sludge, geologically known as “silt,” to a considerable depth, a well-known conductor of water. We can ascertain that the tidal actions of rivers has deposited this sandy bottom, by the quantity of shells found imbedded in the substratum, and by the successive layers of geological strata. This silt is occasionally seen at the surface of the strata, possibly driven there by the force either of the wind or waves, and by this force, whether tidal or natural, collected in a heap, so as to be banked up to the whole height of the successive layers of the soil. The next, or middle layer, is a species of soft clay, of a yellowish-blue colour, and of the subsistence of butter, which is always to be found beneath the surface of the Fens. In this strata, no marine shells are to be found, as in the lowest bed, but river shells are found in abundance; which fact, and also from the character of the strata, shows it is likely to be of fresh-water origin. Shells are found occasionally at the surface, proving that at some time the tide must have overflowed it, and left its deposit of sand and shell. Its depth varies from two to twenty feet, and it is occasionally seen at the surface, as in the peat bogs around Boston. Above this is the top strata, formed of peat, which is the surface of nearly the whole of the level portion of the Fens; its consistency and appearance is that of a dark, brittle crust of considerable thickness. That part of the surface of the marshland which lies nearest the sea is formed of a marly clay, overlapping the peat—the thickest stratum being that part which is touching the sea. Beyond this is a stratum of muddy sand, as at the bottom of the soil, which is completely covered at high water. This is the general composition of the soil of the Fens, though we may surmise that rarely any part of the district is to be found which exhibits the whole series at once of the successive strata of sand, clay, peat, and loam, in the order of their deposition.

Having thus spoken of the composition of the soil of the Fens, we shall be better able to ascertain the reason of their formation. We must, in the first place, picture to our minds the geological era in remote ages, when the tides washed the base of their chalk hills. At this period, long back in the ages of the world's history, the great level of the Fens stretched itself out in the form of a large, shallow bay. It was then an immense tract of water, extending from the sea [on the coasts of Norfolk and Suffolk, through the

countries now denominated as the Fens. The course of the far-spreading tidal streams did not run in a straight line, but turned off into numerous channels and outlets, at times overflowing the countries through which it passed, where, in its progress, it left, here and there, banks of sand to mark the course of its current. Other rivers from the uplands, rushing to disgorge their contents into the sea, met the sea-borne current coming from an opposite direction. The result of this contact of the advancing sea with the upland stream is that the course of the latter is turned from its original channels by the velocity of the former. Where they formerly ran, before turned from their original course, is now marked by shoals and mud-banks, which, mixing with the never-ending deposit at the confluence of sea and river, choke up the almost dry and muddy soil.

We come now to the second stage of this geological change. The level of the bay has now been upheaved several feet by the agency of subterranean force; the rivers that once conveyed their waters into a clear and undefiled bay now empty themselves into a muddy plain, which consequently impedes their course, being frequently intersected by pools and marshes, and stopped in their progress by banks of clay, sand, and other earthy sediment, which it gathers in its way. The sea, as if to recover its lost domain, rises at uncertain intervals to its ancient landmarks; as it recedes, it leaves in the shells, seaweeds, and sandy particles, already deposited there by the drift of the opposing streams, marks of its resistless force. Long, winding channels are thus formed by the advancing sea in the soft grounds, where, for some time after, the ebbing tide can penetrate; but as on each rise of the tide it deposits sand or other sedimentary particles from its bed, barriers are thus made by itself against its own encroaches upon the newly-formed soil. This natural platform, rising higher and higher, has the means of checking any further tidal advance, and the soil thus temporarily reclaimed is again lost, never to be recovered.

We must now pass on to the next geological stage. By degrees the land thus won from the sea rises still higher above the level of the bed of the original bay; banks are formed which confine the rivers within their proper channels.

Soon signs of vegetable life appear. Seeds, long since swept by the current of the upland rivers, have found a lodging-place amidst the deposit of mud and other alluvial matter; in course of time they have taken root, and springing from their burying-place, have grown into tall and stately trees. Where formerly there was only water, has now been turned, by the action of the tides, into a dense forest of lofty trees, which overshadow the plain with their spreading branches. Animals living in secluded caves and dens, hunted

from their usual hiding-places, find refuge amid the densely-covered forests, which offer them a temporary home and sanctuary from their pursuers. Many of these animals, which formerly abounded in the forests of England, have since become extinct as inhabitants of the land, such as the bison, the reindeer, and the elk. With the destruction of these forests, their species has been lost.

Another cycle has passed away, and we view the scene in a different aspect; the entire face of the country has changed. The earth's crust, which we saw lifted by fiery matters contained within its bowels, has sunk again to its primeval level. The river which once flowed rapidly towards the ocean, but, as we have seen, was beaten back by the force of the waters of the sea, has now spread itself into the dried-up channels of its former irregular and diverted course, and deluged the country once alive with vegetable and animal life. This has stunted the growth of the vegetation; the trees of the forest, rotten and decayed, fall to the ground, and dam the stagnant water in lakes and pools, already overgrown with rank weeds and waterplants. The dead bodies of the forest animals, drifted by the rising waters on to the bank, bleach and whiten under the fierce rays of the noonday sun. What was once a stately forest is now a dismal swamp, from the bed of which rises a noxious vapoury matter, in the form of steam, producing death and decay in a region of stillness once full of life. Over the surface of the higher lands, where the waters have subsided, and left the soil less damp than in the plains beneath, is a layer of mossy peat, which preserves the remains of vegetable and animal subsistence from decay. Here the soil is less sterile or poisonous. In the rainy season this part of the Fens is engulfed by the swollen streams; often at their ebb they leave behind a sediment which subsides into a rich, black soil. This was the aspect of the Fens at the historic period. We have thus traced the formation of the Fens from their earliest history, which is to be proved by facts. We have now to inquire at what stage of its scenic history man first beheld it. Now, peat, from whence we derive all our information, has never been known to contain human bones. In the peat which we have noticed in the middle strata, skeletons of the wild boar, beaver, &c, have been found in large numbers, thus proving their existence in this country at certain periods. But not a single human skeleton has been found, though fragments of canoes and weapons, indisputably of the earliest British period, have been discovered, which tends to show they were used when the country was in a swampy state. Besides, geology proves to us, if we are to place any reliance in its well-known facts, that the time required for such a forest as we have endeavoured to describe to flourish must be long anterior to the date of man's first appearance on this globe. We are therefore forced to believe that

when our aboriginal ancestors first took possession of the Fens, they must have been in their earliest stage—when in a state of marsh and bog.

We first learn the condition of this fenny district from the Roman relics found in different parts, and the great works for the improvement of the district, some of which still exist to testify to their great engineering skill and spirit of enterprise. The most important of these works is that which is known as the Roman bank, a barrier line of defence against the acceding tide. This bank passes through Wainfleet, Boston, Spalding, and Wisbeach, and other places in Lincolnshire, which the Romans fortified as military stations, and where Roman antiquities have been plentifully found, in the shape of pottery, weapons, and ruins. These Romans chose as their stations the soil of muddy clay, bordering on the sea-margin, which, as we have said, overlaps the stratum of peat. If this sea fortification is of Roman origin, and of this there can hardly be any doubt, the state of the Fens at the time these works were erected must have been pretty nearly the same as the earliest history recorded of them by monkish chroniclers, who took their residence in these parts nearly eight hundred years after. These embankments have since been enlarged; but by only extending the original works, and not by altering to any great degree the outline of the sea-margin.

The origin of the swamp is said to be on this wise:—When Britain was first honoured by a visit from the Legions of the Roman Eagle, the aboriginal Britons, driven from their ancestral homes by the invading army, fled for refuge and safety to the innermost recesses of that untractable swamp, in forests primeval. Here, secluded from view by the seeds and twining branches growing on the banks, and the exuberant foliage of the leafy forest, the Britons for a time kept the enemy at bay, inasmuch as, not having any canoe or boat, or any other means of maritime transit—a luxury they did not possess, though provided with every means of military science—they could not pass over the dykes and marshes. Here the Britons lived for a time in independent security, subsisting on the fish and other animals that frequented marshy places, and roamed the woods, and clothed themselves with the skins of the animals they caught, of course roughly prepared, and dwelt in huts built of reeds and small twigs strongly plaited together. At last, their retreat was discovered; bridges were built over impassable meres; the sound of military music came nearer and nearer; the tramp of the foot soldiers was heard more distinctly crunching the trees beneath them; the blows of the axe, and crashing fall of the trees, echoed through the rustling air, in the solemnity of the forest sanctuary, as the Romans cleared their path of all incumbrances.

The captured Britons, unable to escape from the grasp of their more powerful foe, surrendered themselves as the slaves of their masters, and were employed in felling the trees yet standing, and otherwise completing the destruction already begun. The winds, before shut out by the thick foliage, sometimes in circular and sometimes in eddying gusts, at others in a straight line, rooted up the trees which had never before felt so much as a breeze, and bared the ground of all vegetation. In the holes left where the trees stood the wind brought up waters from beneath the surface, which soon formed a pool; where there was no vegetation to suck in the moisture of the earth, the soil became moist, and mosses grew on its surface, and thus the firm dry land was turned into a great swamp.

But the Romans, undeterred by any natural difficulties, compelled the Britons to erect a causeway, to the extent of twenty-five miles in length, through the entire region of the swamp. Embankments were made to divert the sea from the inland stream, and to fortify their works from attacks of the tide on either hand. Above the natural foundation of the causeway, which was made solid and firm, as if to endure for ages, was three feet of gravel, so as to be available for traffic and the marches of their trained bands all the year round. Gradually, as their embankment rose, the watery plains subsided, and the force of the waters was further overcome by draining, and the erection of dykes and dams. The patches of ground where they were kept in abeyance rose like islands in the midst of the dismal swamp: but the number of these islands increased, and at last became in a fit state for cultivation. Then there came, as the lords of these sea-formed isles, the monks, who, heralds of civilisation as they were in many things, built here a church, and a monastery there, and beautified their settlement by cultivating green pastures and luxurious corn-fields, and planting trees, orchards, and vineyards, and otherwise adding to the comfort and embellishment of their new home.

We will now briefly trace the early history of the Fen countries. The earliest record of them is that in the middle of the sixth century they were included in the Saxon kingdoms of East Anglia and Mercia. More than fifty years pass away without any notice of them, but in the beginning of the seventh century we learn that about this time was the date of their first real colonisation. There were, however, dwellers in them, we have reason to suppose, before this; from their earliest period, as soon as the confluent waters subsided into dry land, they were tenanted, doubtless, at least for a season, by some stray visitor, who fled in terror out of reach of the invading foe, as well as, in the uncertain condition of Christianity and society, pursued criminals and persecuted Christians, in the early history of the ancient British Church, who found a safe hiding-place

in the unobtruded marshy lands, in the centre of which were then impenetrable thickets. But the monks were undoubtedly the first settlers and cultivators of the district of the Fens. In the solitude of their island home, cut off from the world by impassable bogs and quagmire, the monks spent their time in chanting psalms and holy songs, the music of their voices breaking the stillness of the desert air; in the employment of the chase, by rod and gun, of those animals that abounded in the sea and on the land; and in attending to their more domestic and home matters, as brewing the best ale, and baking the fine wheaten loaf; excelling both in spiritual and bodily pleasures. Choosing the highlands for their holy work, they cleared the unpromising shifting soil, desolated from the want of regular settlers, and began to cultivate the more genial surface, till at last they were rewarded for their toils by seeing the vegetation grow around them, and the dreaded, ghostly, aguish swamps showed signs of reblossoming, and grew into a pleasurable spot, of which the Fenmen soon became proud.

Thus were the islands of certain districts of the Fens inhabited and cultivated. But these monkish islanders were soldiers as well as spiritual priests and hermits; they had to contend against the invaders, whom they effectually kept back by simply cutting down the causeways by which they had access to the mainland. Shut up in the island world, all intercourse being cut off, they stood in no fear of sudden invasion, or danger from their enemies, and in times of persecution and distress they offered a grateful asylum to all Christian refugees.

The most interesting, as to historical notice, of the Fen countries, is the island of Ely, concerning the fertility of which a monkish historian, of reliable authority, William of Malmesbury, says, "that it is represented a very paradise, for that in pleasure and delight it resembleth heaven itself, the very marshes abounding in trees, whose length (height) without knots, doth emulate the stars." He further describes it "as level as the sea; so smooth that there is nothing in it to hinder him that runs through it." Another historian of later date says,—“This isle is exceedingly fruitful in all sorts of grass, there being no place in England that hath a more fertile turf;” he also speaks of an abundance of fish, flesh, and fowl, and of things creeping and flying innumerable, which are caught and eaten for food. This desirable fruitful spot, of which the monks took early possession, who made it a rule to chose the most productive soil, was the scene of fierce contests after the landing of William the Conqueror.

The Norman army had pillaged some of the churches and monasteries of the monks, at which the Fenmen became enraged, and took up arms, *en masse*, in the cause of the people against the

foreigners. Bravely did these monks hold the swamps against the besiegers, who endeavoured to reach across by building pontoons and bridges, which proved of not sufficient strength, for no sooner had the Norman soldiers placed their feet upon them while attempting to cross than the whole fabric gave way, and they were buried in the sinking morass, from which there was no escape. The treacherous William, seeing the uselessness of these structures, ordered a road to be constructed two miles long, and bridges of similar length, with expansive arches, none of which could be completed, for the spirit of evil genius came from the waters, and spoilt the mighty works almost as soon as commenced. In vain did the Conqueror employ a sorceress to counteract the evil spirit, in the supposed shape of the devil, that brooded over his works, by charms and witcheries. A fierce fire, ignited no one knew how, consumed tower, and bridge, and causeway, together with the sorceress, under whose protection the works had proceeded. After a courageous resistance by the Saxons, under their brave leader Hereward, the island of Ely was betrayed into the hands of the Conqueror by some faithless monks, who showed the proud Norman duke an accessible way through the Fens. The Normans once admitted, the peaceful and unsuspecting Fenmen, while engaged in their ordinary occupations, were surprised and arrested; some had their legs maimed, others had their eyes put out, while their more fortunate companions were imprisoned and beaten, and had other injuries inflicted.

Engineering and embanking were but little understood by the Fenmen at that early period; they endeavoured to drain the waters off the marshlands, but with ill success. They fancied that if they let the water off by another outlet their difficulties would be overcome, so that they cut a channel two miles and a half long, to drain off the surplus water; but the result was what might be expected. The ever-springing tide, no longer repulsed by the waters which find their way through the new channel, were left to go where they would. They rushed against dykes and sea-fences, which they annihilated, overflowed the land, and engulfed in destructive floods, houses, lands, and crops. This was in the thirteenth century, during the reign of Edward I. Great was the disaster on the eve of St. Martin's Day, 1236, when a violent storm broke over the whole district, accompanied by tempestuous gales and terrific winds; which disaster lasted for eight days, resulting in the destruction of a large amount of property, and of human lives. The whole of the fenland was literally under water; nothing seemed to escape the violence of the storm; carcasses of animals, bodies of human beings and household valuables were all drifted together by the turmoiling sea, an helpless mass; unable to be extricated, they all perished together.

The sea breaches were soon repaired ; but scarce fifty years had elapsed before a similar misfortune occurred. The attention of the king seems to have been directed to the better securing of the Fen property, and the prevention of similar disasters. The inhabitants, anxious for the securing of their own property, or for the safety of their own lives, did what they could, as far as the scientific knowledge of that age permitted them, to recover the lost lands of the Fens. No sooner did they fill up one channel, and dam one stream, than, through their own pressure, the waters rushed in at another place, so that very little was done by the industrious Fenmen, and their work, as soon as done, was undone by some unforeseen but natural results. Various attempts were made, during the reign of each successive sovereign, to prevent the rushing of the water through the Fens, but with no great results ; if a Fenman successfully drained his own lands, he threw the waters, perhaps, over the land of his neighbour, causing quarrels and differences, which were settled by court of decision, which did what it could to mend matters. This unsatisfactory and unsettled state of the Fens remained till the beginning of the reign of James I., who, declaring " that he would no longer suffer the land to be abandoned to the use of the waters," turned his attention to the drainage of the Fens. By his direction, a commission of inquiry was instituted as to the best method of draining the district of the Bedford Level (which is separated from the Fens of Lincolnshire by the river Welland, to the reclamation of which nothing of importance was done till the eighteenth century), and premiums were offered for the best design. As the result of this inquiry, a report was issued of the state of the country, which was described as a natural birthplace of aguish, poisonous, and pestilential diseases ; in summer time and in winter a cheerless waste of shallow water, in which swarmed countless fowl, the rearing of which was the chief resource and occupation of the people, who had no other means of transit than by boat. The number of acres of land lying in this boggy state at this time was computed at 307,242.

In the following reign, the Earl of Bedford, owner of a large portion of the property, set on foot an enterprise for retrieving the whole region, and the better securing of his property in the Isle of Thorney. The enterprisers demanded, as a return for their risk and expenses, a grant from his lordship of 95,000 acres of land, which the earl agreed to give. In this manner something like £100,000 were spent in three years ; at the end of that time the state of the country was much about the same, the drainage works, from the want of a solid foundation, lasting but for a short time ; they succeeded, however, in cutting a new canal, called the Old Bedford River, which still exists.

The project was renewed during the lordship of his son, under the direction of one, Vermuyden, a Dutch engineer of some repute. A second canal, running parallel with the old Bedford River, was made; the object being, that, raised only on the outer side, the inner banks were left level with the land, so that in time of flood the rising waters, instead of deluging the country, flowed into the channel thus made between the two canals, and were drained off thence to the sea. During the civil wars improvement progressed, but at great intervals, being sadly interrupted by the riots and quarrels between the rough Fenmen and the boors in the outlying districts, who hindered the men at their work by letting in the water through sluices and holes made under the covert of the night, breaking their tools, and committing other grievances. The case seemed a hopeless one; each proprietor drained his land as best he could, protecting it from future mischief by a series of embankments and "polders," and by throwing off the water by means of a sort of rude windmill, which, by use of buckets, dipped up the water, and threw it—it mattered not where, so long as his own pastures were well drained—oftentime much to the annoyance of his neighbour, who certainly had the right of retaliation. During the summer, the damages done by the tide were repaired, lines of sea defences made, and the hope of the Islander rose for a time; but during the winter, the swollen streams overstepped the boundary marks, and breaking into the fortifications and banks, reduced them to a common level, which admitted the waters at will, and the hopes of the Fenmen fell as they beheld their labours swept away by a resistless flood.

There were, to the relief of the almost distracted Fenmen, signs of improvement, by the making of the Eau Bank Cut, in the year 1818, a design contemplated and suggested to the Commissioners of the Fens in 1720, but which for some reason was abandoned. It was carried out under the direction of Telford and Sir John Rennie, two eminent engineers of the day. In three years it was opened; so perfect were the results, that the waters fell at once seven feet from the upper end of the level. Deep, narrow channels were cut to convey the waters back again to the ocean, and the fresh water stream from the uplands was confined in banks, and distributed over the surface of the Fens, in suitable quantities. Improvements were also effected by the erection of sea walls, which were built firmer and stronger; the valve doors through which the drain water passed were shut by a spring, so that the waters could not come in as heretofore, and the floodgates were heightened and improved, and made water-tight.

The most successful work of the enterprise was the cutting of the Nene Outfal, a canal passing through the sandbanks of the

Wash to the open sea, ever an outlet for the stagnant waters of the river. So marvellous were the effects produced by this outfall that, in a few hours from its opening, the waters drained off at so rapid a rate, that what before was an island only reached by boat was now converted into dry land. All difficulties with their enemy, the sea, being in a fair state of being partially overcome, if not entirely so, the agricultural Fenman received, in increased crops and arable pasture, the fruit of his labour, for which he had long waited; his toil and the sweat of his brow, which seemed almost thrown away, were rewarded by a high state of cultivated land; the watery meres, by the hand of the labourer, were turned into fruitful fields; and the only disaster that has marred the well-earned success of the Fenmen occurred five years since, when the waters once more made their appearance over the cultivated land, washing away in its torrent sea-walls and barriers; among other damages leaving a gap in the western bank of the channel of the Eau Bank Cut; but the most serious damage was a chasm which was opened in the same cut, four miles beyond the gap, which rapidly increased, so that in thirty-six hours the chasm was forty yarty yards wide, and, in little more than two days, 15,000 acres were immersed, at which time the mischief was still going on. These damages, by the indomitable will and energy of the Fenmen, were quickly repaired; by the aid of science more powerful means were adopted to preserve the Fens from a similar fate; and we trust that the continued efforts of the Fenmen to keep back the tide will be more effectual, and attended with that success to which their industry, forbearance, and watchfulness entitles them.

R. C.

TUESDAY ; OR, ST. THOMAS'S DAY

"Tuesday had always been a significant day in Becket's life. On a Tuesday he was born and baptised; on a Tuesday he fled from Northampton; on a Tuesday he had left the king's court in Normandy; on a Tuesday he had left England on his exile; on a Tuesday he had returned from that exile; it was now on Tuesday that the fatal hour came."—*Quarterly Review*.

"TUESDAY, so please you," said the master of a vessel lying in Calais harbour—"not before Tuesday," was the answer to a question as to when he would sail for England.

"Tuesday—not before Tuesday," said the inquirer, thoughtfully.

"The damage sustained from the gale of the day before yesterday," the mariner added, "will not sooner be repaired. I cannot move till Tuesday."

Again was the last word echoed by the individual who had questioned the master; musing, he turned towards the town, murmuring audibly to himself—

"Tuesday?—yes, Tuesday is the day; Tuesday is *my* day."

He strode forward. Of tall stature, of spare form, the carriage of the speaker was that of one accustomed to command: that of the proud Archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas à Becket. His steps were arrested by one who approached. It was a monk acting as his servant, called Herbert of Bosham. He accosted Becket, desiring to know where he would have certain articles bestowed, of which the inquirer was the bearer. The prelate replied—

"It boots not now, good Herbert. Till two days have passed, till Tuesday, I cannot quit this place."

"Not till Tuesday!" said Herbert, looking significantly at his chief, as if it were a remarkable coincidence that Tuesday must be the day of his departure. "Since it is thus," he added, "my lord will not be sorry to learn that one of his former friends has arrived here, in Calais, impatient to confer with him—even the good old Robert of Merton."

"And where is he?"

"He awaits your coming at your lodgings; while I, at his bidding, came forth to seek you."

"Indeed!" he exclaimed, with unwonted animation. "That is well; but comes he alone?"

"Quite unattended, save by one lad—a smooth-faced youth."

Becket asked no further questions, but hastened to meet the visitor thus announced. Cold dignity was relaxed by impatience to receive the warm greetings of an old friend; the Canon Robert having been his early instructor.

"Much I joy to see my Lord of Canterbury," said Robert

cordially grasping both the bishop's hands, "and to see him as I see him this day, triumphant over all his enemies. Evermore will the Church glory in him, who has not only put meaner adversaries to shame, but has known how to bring a great king to reason."

A soldier in his youth, Becket could not hear of triumph, and vanquished adversaries, without experiencing a revival of feelings which he had known before he laid down the sword for the lord high chancellor's seat, or the crozier of the bishop.

"You touch me nearly," he replied. "I would not be vain-glorious, yet can I not deny that much satisfaction is mine, from bending the stiff-necked arrogance of a mighty prince; seeing I am in this the champion of no common potentate, but fight the battle of the holy one who fills St. Peter's seat on earth; who is authorised to bind and to loosen; whom pious mortals must reverence as the appointed vice-gerent of the Lord of All." While speaking his glance fell on the companion of Robert. He started, paused, and looked on the youth with an air of inquiring wonder. In a faltering voice he demanded—

"And this, thy young associate—how is he named?"

"He is called Edwy Harfleur. But need I tell my lord——"

"No; more is not needed. It can be no other. Such as thou art, I joy to see thee."

So saying he embraced the youth, not with the stately solemnity of a bishop, but with the affectionate warmth of a father.

"It can be no other," he said. "My sweet Elfrida! years have not been unkind to thee. Largely thy stature has increased, but—shall I not say it, seeing thou art mine?—that thou art greater is the least of the advantages which time, from his huge wallet, has lent thee. In that blooming countenance I mark the living image of thy loved mother's angel face. Speak to me, dearest—speak, Elfrida!"

"I know not," Robert's companion said, "how to respond to praise from lips so revered. I would that Heaven, with my mother's features, had bestowed a portion of my father's mind."

"Why, that might be misplaced. The tunic of a man would look unseemly joined to a damsel's kirtle. But wherefore," continued the prelate, "this guise?" addressing his speech to Robert. "Was it that in merry mood you wished to know if a father could find out a riddle daughter?"

"That, my lord, if aught in sport can fitly celebrate victory, might not greatly offend; but other considerations moved me; for seeing that our journey to meet you was long, a boy, as my attendant, would attract less notice—such was my thought—than a maiden so incomparably fair as Elfrida."

"You have acted discreetly."

Robert added. "A thought crossed my mind, moreover, that it

might be convenient this appearance should be retained by Elfrida till you, on due reflection, could determine with whom and where she may henceforward reside."

"Thy cloudless brain is ever wakeful. I like thy thought; should I live it may be well to remember it, and otherwise, should it be my hap——"

"What—would my lord say?" asked Elfrida.

"Should I die," Becket resumed—"for life is ever uncertain—should I suddenly be called away, and solemn warnings in visions of the night announce that here my abode may be short ——"

"Oh, say not so," interrupted Elfrida; "your years have not been so many that you may deem Nature will soon claim surrender, and your health and strength justify a fond and confident hope that not yet can 'the last enemy' venture to assail a life so valued, so important to mankind, and I dare almost say, even to Heaven."

"None can tell when the great Reaper may employ his scythe, nor in what field it soonest will be used. Health and strength may be promptly resumed by their Everlasting Owner, and should their continuance be permitted, violence may destroy."

"What can have caused such forebodings?" the daughter eagerly inquired.

"Warnings from another world, which may not be neglected."

"Warnings!"

"Yes; I must not dissemble," said Becket. "I would fain spare you vain alarm, but tokens of death have not been wanting; and in the gloom of night dreams have brought before me the image of the buried dead, while unearthly sounds have called on me to join the departed in the world of spirits."

"Such apparitions," Robert remarked, "often take advantage of the night to perplex the sleeper. They are of small importance. Your health has not suffered from them, and violence, surely that is little likely to approach. Your sacred character must awe the boldest intruder."

Looking mournfully on Elfrida and the canon, the archbishop replied, "Be that still your thought if it can comfort; but ever bear in mind that in this restless world our stay can in no case be of long duration, and may, even before the close of the passing hour, terminate."

The listeners bowed acquiescence in the reflection, but both Robert and Elfrida were struck by the dreary anticipations which oppressed the mind of their friend and father. Of these they were often reminded by reflections which fell from him in the course of the day. Night arrived, and Robert, fatigued by travelling, retired to rest awhile. Elfrida remained alone with Becket. Bending over her with a compassionate air, he thus addressed her—

"I wish, Elfrida, not to depress, but to prepare you for trials

which, ere long, it may be yours to meet. From such as human foresight can guard against, I would gladly shield youth and innocence. Your situation, you must be aware, is peculiar ; and I, looked up to by men as a miracle of good fortune, am denied that happiness which the lowliest hind enjoys—that of calling his child his own.”

“ Must this be ever so ? ”

“ It must—for your security. When King Henry let loose his fierce malevolence, it was not enough that his vengeance should fall on me, that I should be a banished man, but all in any degree related to me, even infants at the breast, were ordered to depart the kingdom. If known as Becket's daughter, Elfrida must have shared the fugitives' exile. From the position which is mine I may be exposed to a new burst of demoniacal fury.”

With trembling eagerness, the daughter asked, “ Is it not possible to descend from that high station, and would not wisdom counsel an exchange of grandeur for happiness ? ”

“ Did I consult my own affections, Elfrida, I should answer yes ; ” but for me to abandon my See and its all-important duties would be not simply to forego greatness, but to seek undying shame and hopeless perdition.”

“ Your speech is terrifying, sir. Can perdition await the seeker after humble happiness ? ”

“ In my case it is so ; would it were not ! As Thomas à Becket I could call the worm my brother, but as Primate of England, so recognised by the Holy See, to that Ruler whom Heaven has placed above all earthly princes, I owe dutiful allegiance, nor can I quit the post assigned to me without, as it were, affronting the King of Kings.”

Elfrida listened with amazement.

Becket resumed—“ It may not be that I am better, but different from other men assuredly I am, and such to the world I must appear. No common part have I to act, for no common lot has been mine. Made his chancellor by King Henry, as his faithful servant I held myself prepared to administer in peace the law to his subjects, and in war to draw the sword against his enemies ; but when still higher advancement was mine, could I permit worldly considerations to outweigh heavenly cares ? ”

Elfrida smilingly asked—“ Can a mortal be exempted from worldly cares ? ”

She was answered—“ Not without sharp discipline and long-continued penance ; and now, seeing the years you have numbered enable you in some sort to comprehend the sorrow of which you have been the fondly-beloved cause—”

“ Not so, I hope. Can my conduct have been such as only to give my parent sorrow ? ”

"Not your conduct, but your existence, Elfrida."

"My existence!"

"He who essays the steep of fame should hold it beneath him to love. Yet I was not superior to such failing. Not even immortal hopes could lift me above human weakness. I became a husband. A being, radiant as an angel, gave thee to see the light."

"To be a source of affliction to you! Alas!"

"Composed as we are of warring elements, all man prizes, fondly covets, is constantly surrounded by that which reason would avoid, or piety abjure. Conflicting claims grow on their influence, and nature's yearnings seduce the wanderer from the steady unbroken observances of religion. She in whose image you were formed, too bright for earth, too soon was called away. The Searcher of all hearts alone can know how sunk my feeble spirit beneath the shock! The mourner could only find a refuge from madness in the paths of ambition. These I pursued with determination, and men wondered at my success. They saw me great, and deemed me happy. They knew not the secret of my heart; they dreamed not of the scourgings this shrinking frame was condemned daily to endure, nor of the garment of punishment which it was unceasingly to wear."

"It passes my meek comprehension why such dread self-inflictions can be craved."

"They are needed to wean the refractory flesh from its unhal-
lowed strivings against the spirit—strivings which interfere with the perfect discharge of the high duties of the august office I fill, and holding down to the world, withdraw from God."

"And am I, unhappily, of this the sinful cause?"

"No, dear one; the sinfulness is mine—is mine alone. My every thought should be devoted to the service of the Church, and the glory of the Most High. But cares for thee—not thine the fault—still intrude; and suggesting what may be thy pitiable condition, hold back my resolution, and make me feel myself at heart a coward."

"Not so—oh! no," Elfrida exclaimed; "not such the character which just reflection would give to paternal fondness."

"You judge erroneously, not knowing the stern, the terrifying exercise of power which duty demands from me, nor seeing the deadly malice which its unflinching performance must array against me. Warnings not a few have admonished me to beware how I approach the shore of England. I know the perils which environ me, and could brave them all with serene assurance might the pain and sorrow they will bring fall on me alone. But seeing those who pursue me are animated by fury which fiend could not surpass, I am moved sometimes to say, in the words of the gifted poet, Cædmon—

"I am powerless :
Me have so hard
The clasps of hell
So firmly grasped."

"Let courage, then, my lord and father, move you to burst those clasps, and thus defeat the monsters leagued against your peace."

"Had I another name, or could that which I wear be forgotten, with you at Merton, where your nonage under the good canon has happily passed, I might seek peace, and know enjoyment. But is it for me, who feared not to brave and defy the wrath of a great monarch, whose flaming eyes grave sages believe have, by a spell, derived their lustre from an infernal source—from the arch-fiend himself—is it for me to retire from the field of duty, a worsted combatant?"

The prelate was still speaking with collected energy when Robert entered. He seemed to start at Becket's excitement, and the archbishop, suspecting his loud speech had disturbed the canon, said, in a soothing tone—

"How now? My voice, I fear, has broken thy slumber. This should not have been after thy recent toilsome journey."

"It was not that brought me now before you, but tidings have reached me of evil omen."

"What may they portend?"

"I dare not say; but of this I am assured, that young De Moreville is in this place."

"That is of little moment," Becket remarked.

"So may it prove; but this youth's father, Hugh de Moreville, is bound in ties of close friendship with the parricide, De Tracy. De Moreville is a name which would seem identified with the '*City of Death*,' and its present wearer, fame reports, has not failed to add to it the stain of recent crime, having boiled a young Saxon."

"Boiled a Saxon! did you say?" Becket demanded. "Alive?"

"Yes. With Norman ferocity, a helpless prisoner, by his order—mournful to relate—was pitilessly plunged, bound hand and foot, into a cauldron, and seethed to death, on a false accusation preferred by De Moreville's wife, whose wrath, it may be, was moved.

"This may be a vain fable. Go to your couch, and rest. How can what you have told affect me?"

"In the self-same hour," Robert resumed, "I learned, as if in connection with Reuben de Moreville's arrival, that your old implacable foe, Ranulph de Broc, of Saltwood, grieved and incensed at hearing the king again takes you into favour, has called forth his armed retainers, and awaiting your approach from Dover, openly declares you shall not enter Canterbury alive."

"I would not so far wrong his fiendish brutality as to suspect his truth in this instance, if his power should second his will. But, Elfrida," Becket continued, "you turn pale. Fear not for me. If not a sparrow fall but by especial permission, think you, unless such is Heaven's decree, an archbishop—a consecrated servant of the Lord—can be lost?"

"Yet go not," Elfrida entreated, in great agitation; "go not to Canterbury."

"You know not what you ask. I cannot be stayed. What! shall a braggart threat awe me into a pitiful retreat? As soon shall the bold, enduring cliffs which defend our native island fly from the rude threatenings of the angry sea. Firm, immoveable as they are, like them will Becket serenely repel the frothy menaces levelled at him, and, with a voice more potent than that of Canute, bid the presumptuous waves or waylayers retire. Trembler, be reassured; fear not for me."

Elfrida looked tearfully on her father. Her emotion was great. It sprang from sources which were but imperfectly comprehended by her present company. Affectionately anxious for a parent, she was shocked at hearing young De Moreville could be suspected of plotting against the archbishop's life. For reasons which even the Canon, who was aware of their being acquainted, could penetrate, she felt assured such a report had no just foundation. Despite of this conviction, anxious surmises, astonishment, and alarm grew on what had been so unexpectedly disclosed.

CHAPTER II.

"The milder passions show the man;
For as the leaf did beautify the tree,
The pleasant flowers bedeck the painted spring;
Even so, in men of greatest reach and power,
A mild and piteous thought augments renown."—*Lodge*

"LET proud captains draw the sword, and deem it honour to fight in the cause of a mere temporal monarch; the true churchman disdains the mean triumphs to which they aspire. His more exalted views aim at extending the dominion of Heaven; and of putting Satan under his feet."

Such was the speech, such the thought, of Becket; and to accomplish the sublime objects of his meditation, he constantly kept in view the advancement of its importance, and the increase of the revenues of the Church. These of all things he held more essential to the glory of the Most High.

Calais was a fishing town of little importance. It was not then graced with the church of Notre Dame and other noble erections, which great victories at a later date enabled the English to

supply—only to leave them in the fulness of time for the comfort and glory of France.

At the date of Becket's visit, the herring fishery had proved successful; its population and wealth were obviously on the increase. This was noted by the archbishop, who piously turned over in his mind the interesting question: could not this growing prosperity be made, through him, conducive to that of the Church? Nor was it long before he came to the conclusion that the Pope might grant a tithe of the fish taken to the Abbey of St. Bertin, the prior of which was Becket's friend, who had shown him hospitality when flying from the wrath of the King of England, and wearing a disguise. The thought was imparted to Herbert, who approved of it, and indeed undertook, on the day after his arrival, to make inquiries on the subject of the fishery in the town, with a view to found, on their result, an application to Rome. He did so, and now attended to make his report to the canon. It was not of a very encouraging nature; as he was forced to own, the fishermen were such strangers to grace that he had been rudely told, before they would give up a tenth of their taking they would decimate all the priests in Christendom.

Elfrida was seated in a chamber which looked over the sea, her eyes resting on England, her thoughts turned to Merton, and fondly dwelt on the peaceful days she had passed there, before those startling anxieties were known to her which now made her tremble for her father and for herself.

There, in her childhood, she had known Reuben de Moreville. They had plucked cowslips and gathered sloes and blackberries together. His heart was as tender as his person was handsome. He had, indeed, once wrung the neck of the struggling dove which an arrow had wounded, holding it to be the duty of firm-nerved humanity to extinguish life when it could in no other way terminate suffering; but the unoffending linnets he would not snatch from their nest; the homeless, unburrowed infant rabbit he cherished in his bosom, and fed with kindly care.

"One is from England," said a clerk who now entered, "and would fain speak with the archbishop."

"He may not be disturbed," Elfrida replied.

"So of myself I reported; but he, as if he heard or heeded not, persisted in his application, insisting if he could not speak with him that he might confer with his almoner, his cross-bearer, or any one about him; and following now close on my footsteps, while I speak he is here."

Elfrida turned, and with no small surprise and apprehension saw the individual thus announced was no other than Reuben de Moreville.

Still wearing male attire, her confusion was great. Did he know of her coming with Robert? Was he aware of her disguise? Could he recognise her now? or did he suppose he looked on the archbishop's page? were among the questions which quicker than tongues could embody them in words rushed to her mind in that moment. Reuben shared not her confusion. Sedately he advanced. His countenance was grave but not disturbed. He approached Elfrida, to give for the archbishop the message of which he made himself the bearer. In that moment their eyes met, and the youth stood transfixed as if a spear had been passed through his bosom. It might be figuratively said his step was really arrested by the dart of the most potent assailant of the human heart. Stedfastly gazing on the downcast countenance of the supposed stripling, he recognised the beloved and admired companion of his earlier days. A start and a pause testified the surprise which it was his to experience; and panting for breath, the object of his coming forgotten, he murmured her name.

The discovery was so complete that had she ever studied evasion it would now have been laid aside as useless; but under the care of Robert, the Canon of Merton, Elfrida had never learned dissimulation, and though disordered at being seen in her present dress, she could not refrain from answering his unpremeditated salutation with kindly familiarity.

"You, Reuben!—you here!" she said; "I marvel what may be your errand."

"That may well be," was his reply; "and not less do I marvel to meet you in Calais, and thus arrayed, the dress of your own sweet sex, which you have till now adorned, put away."

"Eventful times cause unlooked-for changes. I might have expected my altered appearance would prevent surprise by giving me to pass undiscovered—unremembered."

"Oh, never—never, Elfrida! No habiliments can abate the ethereal brightness of those eyes, or the modest roses of thy cheeks, which at once blend the choicest beauties of earth with the mildly beaming stars of heaven, and offer that to the charmed view which can be confounded with nothing else."

Elfrida blushed, but repressing a smile which had attempted to show itself, she replied—

"Though weakness is but too ready to give flattery a welcome, not from Reuben de Moreville would I hear it. Rather would I listen to explanations of the chance which at this moment brings him to France. That the same day which saw me reach this place from Merton should be that of your arrival from Knaresborough, where your father has of late resided, is a coincidence most marvellous."

"That I cannot deny ; but questionless the same event brought us here—the reconciliation of the Archbishop of Canterbury with the King. Herbert of Bosham, who I learn is here, comes to rejoin his old pupil on his triumphant return to his See ; and I come, it may be, to prevent it."

"To prevent it, said you?"

"I did."

"And why would you, Reuben, attempt to oppose his proceeding to Canterbury, where he is so anxiously expected, and where he would be so joyously welcomed? To you or any of your house did he ever give offence?"

"He never did ; and therefore it is, admiring his vast talents and learning, and remembering his far-famed piety, hither have I hied, to save his life."

"His life! Good saints protect us! Can that be really in danger?"

"Not if he will heed the counsel I attend to give."

"Impart it to me," cried Elfrida, impatiently. "Say what you have to tell."

"I would do much, beloved, to gratify your awakened curiosity ; but on this point press me not."

"Deny me not. On this point only will I press you."

"It may not be—you are too inquisitive. Much may be allowed to your dear sex, but there is a limit beyond which concession may not pass ; there is a moment when discretion commands forbearance."

"Speak not thus coldly, Reuben ; let not discretion withhold from me what may save a father's life."

"A father's! Is it so? Ha! a thought comes over me my dulness never entertained before!"

Elfrida shrunk back in new embarrassment.

"What have I said?" she exclaimed.

"What need not—what cannot be recalled," he rejoined ; "cannot, I say ; for when my gratified eye rests on you, I wonder at my blindness heretofore, as there I see written by the hand of Nature—or, speaking with all reverence, that of the Deity—a full and perfect record of the fact. There, though still in harmony with the feminine delicacy which enslaves the rudest of our race, I mark the dignity, the elevation of soul, which almost lifts the archbishop above mortality."

"No more. My tell-tale tongue has sinned against prudence—against duty."

"On you no reproach shall fall. Confide in me ; and since it has thus chanced, you shall be depository of a secret connected with my present expedition, not less startling than momentous. Our

fears, our sorrows, may be equal; but with this melancholy difference—Elfrida trembles for a father's life; I have to fear something even worse. You would save a parent from being assassinated; I—oh! that this should be—would save him who is known as my father from being an assassin!”

“Your speech is terrible! What dismal revelation does it preface?”

“Desperate spirits have conspired. Learning that King Henry has humbled himself to make peace with Becket it has stung them to the quick; they are mad with fury. Ranulph de Broc, long the archbishop's enemy, with other malcontents, fierce, unrelenting as himself, have with my father, Hugh de Moreville, made a pact to pursue ‘the haughty, tyrannical churchman,’ so they designate the archbishop, ‘even to death.’”

“Heaven forefend! And can your father join with these cruel enemies of mine?”

“Yes, they have compassed him about; his weakness yields to their ferocity. I mark it with sadness for his sake, though, as a parent he has been sparing of kindness to me, his only son.”

“That, Reuben, I have heard, and much beside; but might not your timely counsel have snatched him from the dangerously sinful path tempters would now make him tread?”

“Only by acting as I have done could I hope to save him—to me De Moreville would not listen. He ever was a melancholy man. Often absorbed in gloomy rumination, he has seemed withdrawn from all around. Anon a start—a groan, I have sorrowfully witnessed; while a cold sweat suffused his visage, as if,—such the impression made on me in spite of myself,—as if horrid recollections of the past announced an awful future.”

“What would you, then, have with the archbishop?”

“I would tell all I know, and what I fear, to the end that he may baffle the De Brocs.”

“Their design being to intercept——”

“And to prevent his reaching Canterbury alive. This,” said Reuben, “would I make him know.”

“Heaven speed your purpose! May your coming turn him aside from the course he would pursue. Oh! would that he could withdraw from the harassing cares imposed on him by his high office, and rest in calm retirement—no longer envied by the proud, forgotten by the world!”

“Might this, the wish of filial duty, be realised, how would Reuben joy that he had been the happy instrument of working such a change!”

“That would be happiness!”

“Then might it be mine,” said Reuben, “to seek your smiling

unpretending retreat, there to recal the blissful days when, looking on an unclouded sky, the whole world was our pleasure-garden."

"The sylvan glories of the scene offering their fragrance and beauty."

"While more than renewed our bye-gone felicity," the fondly admiring youth responded, "with expanded minds, for us the cup of happiness would be full. How sweet to mark the varying seasons' change! Our passage from gloomy apprehension to glad security would be imaged by the cheering progress of the young year, successful over the storms of winter bidding all nature revive in vernal freshness. Together we should mark the tender crocus escaping from the cold hard flint which barred it from light."

"Or note the lily's half-formed flower," Elfrida said.

"And the peach blossom boldly confronting the winds of March, blushing for that his appointed train, the green leaves, refrain from due attendance. Then, seen in lively rivalry, all Flora's treasures spread before us, mine might be the delightful task to snatch their gayest colours, and weave of them a chaplet of love, to place on the glossy hair and alabaster brow of Elfrida."

Before what last fell from Reuben the archbishop had entered unperceived. Silent and motionless as a statue, he listened to the words of Reuben, and witnessed the impassioned energy of the speaker. Astonishment restrained his tongue. He spoke not, but in the moment when Reuben last uttered the name of Elfrida the youth discovered that they were no longer alone. Coming forward, the withering glance of Becket fell on Elfrida, and grasping her arm, he drew her to him.

"Fallen!" he exclaimed, "fool that I was! I deemed thee almost celestial! Mean dross of fallen nature, I looked not to find thee here, a willing listener to senseless adulation, which idiots of thy sex accept for love. Go!"

"Yet hear me, sir. This visitor is from England, his name De Moreville; he comes but to tell——"

"I have spoken!" the archbishop sternly interrupted. "Heard you not my command? Answer me not, even so much as to say ay! I will not hear thy voice! Earthworm, away!"

Elfrida looked sadly on her father; his wrathful aspect she could not endure; to her it had all the dread terrors of a thunderbolt. Bowing obedience, she withdrew.

"And who," said he, in a tone of scornful wrath, which was in excellent keeping with the disdainful fire of his eye, "who and what art thou, that thou dardest presume to invade my privacy?"

Reuben meekly answered—"My name has but now been told. I am called De Moreville."

"That is to say, being interpreted, 'Of the city of death;'—I heard the name, but what has any wearer of it to do with me? If the story of a boiled Saxon give it notoriety, why comes a scion of that house to me? If thou art son or brother to the boiler, with all the honours of thy family, here thou art spurned, for them as for thyself!"

The tone of the archbishop was lordly and condemnatory. Men were accustomed to quail before it. Not so did Rueben. Serenely folding his arms, and returning the reproachful glance which had fallen on him, he replied—"Forasmuch as I came uninvited, I could look for no cordial welcome, yet might that rude flout have been spared. I have not sought to extenuate the doings of my progenitors, and cannot feel that blame for them ought to fall on me. I could not choose my parents, and had my mother been a Syrian pagan born, even that, I should hardly have thought, could be to me a matter of reproach or shame."

Little used to be thus answered by those who stood before him, Becket's passion was at once inflamed and checked by the taunt embodied in the last words of Reuben. It was true, though it was not generally known, that Gilbert Becket, his father, a sheriff of London, having gone on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, there married the daughter of a Saracen, by whom the Englishman had been captured. The archbishop offered no immediate reply.

Reuben added—"If I have small claim to courtesy, I cannot feel I ought to encounter from your eminence such extreme condemnation for aught that I have said or done."

"Was it well," demanded the archbishop, "here to enter, claim acquaintance with my attendant, and forthwith attempt to beguile by pouring into her untutored ear the pestilent breathings of unhallowed love?"

"This was not so. I sought not to beguile."

"I heard your words, marked the fervour which expressed them, and their all-too-kind reception."

"For listening can she be blamed?"

"Not by a spanksome gailant, prepared to profit from woman's weakness, here smilingly apparent."

"You wrong Elfrida; indeed, my lord, you do. No weakness have you witnessed. If looks of kindness answered my poor speech their source was sacred. Filial affection gave them birth, in sincere gratitude for an effort too largely praised to save her father's life."

"Her father's life!" Becket exclaimed, with renewed vehemence. Till that moment he was not aware that her relationship was known. "The traitress or the fool," he continued, "has told all behoved her to conceal. Our abode here, her sex, and ——"

"Be calm, my lord. Resume your wisdom, which, for the moment, has been laid aside. It was not through her that my steps was directed hither. For her sex—oh, who that gazed upon her features could for a moment think nature so madly prodigal as to bestow such beauty on any created being but woman! If she made known that you might call her daughter, trust me but in this, it was wrung from her unwittingly, by strong emotion, when I, in explanation of my mission here, told of the danger which threatened your valued life."

The archbishop panted for breath. Exasperated by the thought that Elfrida had voluntarily made known her situation, her sex, her quality, his bosom had been fired with grief and rage. The mingling intrepidity, tenderness, and reverence which presented themselves in the language, and yet more in the deportment of young De Moreville perplexed him. Yet doubt suggested new upbraidings.

"You are affluent in speech," he said, "and if you were but so in truth ——"

"For that—for that in this case he is so, I can vouch," said the Canon Robert, entering from the adjoining apartment, in which he had been discussing the question of the fish tithe with Herbert, "unseen, I listened, and heard his speech; which, not lacking admiring homage to beauty, had for its great immediate object your safety. That alone had brought him hither. The rest he has faithfully reported."

"My first preceptor," Becket responded, turning graciously to the aged Robert, "thy pupil still requires thy guidance. Thy voice has ever been that of truth. My ears, my eyes, I can less rely upon than on thy speech. Call back Elfrida."

Not slow was the canon to obey the wish thus expressed by the prelate. Few moments had passed, when he re-appeared, leading the tearful daughter to the presence of her now gentle father.

"Look up, girl," he said, "and be gay. Hasten to dry those tears. On thy vexed father they fall as bright, as burning as molten lead. I wronged thy truth, yet it was not me, but my error; which, so to speak, put my true self aside. Thy father is a lonely bark, the sport of tempestuous winds and opposing currents, that fiercely bear it where they will, then toss it back in wanton scorn. Put grief away. I would soothe, I would comfort thee."

"It is already done, sir. More needs not, save that my father would now incline a listening ear to that which, favoured by Heaven, one her attends to relate, which may save you to a pious nation's love."

Her suit, backed by the canon, made on Becket the desired impression. His severity had given way to tenderness; he resumed

his wonted calmness, which spoke a mind so absorbed in grand aspirings as to be elevated above all the ordinary cares of mortal life. Thus collected, he gave his assent to what had been implored, and regarding his visitor with inviting courtesy, signified his readiness to hear him.

Reuben entered on a recital of the circumstances and considerations which had brought him there. He told that Reginald Fitzurse, Ranulph, and Robert de Broc, their nephew, John William de Tracy, and Richard le Bret, commonly called "the Brute," had, he had reason to know, so far prevailed with his father as to gain him over to their views. These extended to opposing Becket's return to Canterbury, and preventing it by violence. Their animosity, he could state, knew no bounds. The sacrifice of his life alone would satisfy the demands of rancorous hatred. It was this had moved him, anxious to save his father from participation in their guilty outbreak, to seek the threatened prelate, in the hope that such a disclosure as he could make would induce him to lay aside his purpose of immediately revisiting England.

The archbishop listened to the statement wholly undisturbed. If for a moment his serenity was shaken, it was when the names of the conspirators were repeated. It was not their strength or their ferocity that he regarded, though one, for his savageness, was called a brute, and Tracy was believed to be a parricide; but they had generally sworn fealty to him. That they could be prepared to violate such an oath was, in the estimation of the archbishop, the foulest of crimes man's depravity could imagine or perpetrate. He thanked the young De Moreville for the part he had taken, however undesirable the tidings of which he was the bearer; and graciously promised that they should not go unrewarded, as, for his sake, he would forbear to include his father among the excommunicate, against whom his just wrath would ere long be launched.

"May I hope, sir," Reuben eagerly inquired, "for a further boon—that, thus warned, you will not depart for England?"

Solemnly shaking his head, after a brief pause, Becket replied—

"That may not be. I have fought as a soldier for an earthly monarch—shall I fear to confront death in the cause of the King of Heaven? How would idler's laugh, if I, who have found a seat on the right hand of God's viceroy, even Alexander the Third, at Rome—if I, whose stirrup has been held by the sovereign of this realm, could condescend to fear or to respect the machinations of these men of blood! Shall Fitzurse, who fitly derives his name from an uncomely beast, or De Tracey, his hands, if report be true, stained with a father's blood, boast they have successfully opposed my approaching the sacred altar, at which the faithful expect me

to officiate? No; they may kill, but never intimidate Becket. Let them take heed in time. Should their baseness so far prevail as to lay me low, for them there will be no Hebron, no Kedesh in Galilee, no Ramoth in Gilead, to offer a city of refuge for the slayers of the appointed servant of Heaven."

"Yet still, my father, may not prudence be content to rest in safety?"

"Not when duty calls. I dare not owe my life to prudence. I bow not to these Judases. No; it is mine to meet their insolence with cool disdain. There is no safety in submission to the wicked, no safety where the olive-branch is spread over compromised principles. The pilgrim from the mount of olives, so reached, "looks on the Dead Sea."

"A sad image is embodied in your words, dear father," said Elfrida. "May you not, at least, defer your return to England?"

"No. If peril threaten, I must grapple with it. Such is my destiny. The term of my mortal existence cannot long be extended. Beyond Tuesday, I may not tarry here."

"Why Tuesday?"

"It is, I know not why, in my onward march a day most significant. It was on Tuesday I first entered life; on Tuesday I was baptised; on Tuesday, when overwhelming might pursued, I retreated from Northampton; on Tuesday I left the shore of my native land; it was on Tuesday that I submitted to be reconciled to be King Henry; on Tuesday I had nearly sailed from Whitsand, when the interests of religion called me to Calais; on Tuesday—unavoidably detained till then—God willing, I will most assuredly depart for England."

THE MISSION OF TICKET-OF-LEAVE MEN

It is the opinion commonly held by the English people that the ticket-of-leave is the primary cause of those injuries which its holder so often inflicts upon his fellow-countrymen and women. Consequently we hear it said that the ticket-of-leave system is a failure, the constantly recurring offences committed by the ticket-holders being adduced as conclusive evidence of this fact. And, indeed, nothing can be more natural, but at the same time nothing more erroneous, than this belief.

The English ticket-of-leave system, or rather, the system our legislators devised under that name, cannot be pronounced a failure, for the very good reason that it has never been tried. The system which is called ticket-of-leave (if such a mass of confusion can be called a system at all) has certainly been the cause of an enormous amount of crime, which, in all probability, had the system been applied in its integrity, would have been avoided.

The history of the ticket-of-leave system is briefly this. For more than half a century we annually transported vast numbers of criminals to our Australian dependencies, there to be employed by the colonists; and as long as labour was scarce, they were willingly enough received, many of them, after serving their time, rising to men of wealth and position. But whether the convicts did well or ill in their new abodes, they very rarely returned to trouble their native country; and we therefore congratulated ourselves that we were well rid of a dangerous class of the community. Occasionally sad stories of the increased depravity and intense misery of these unhappy persons reached this country, but for the long period during which they were despatched to Australia, the English people gave scarcely any heed to narratives of this kind.

When, however, the great increase of free emigration made labour much more easily to be procured, the colonists discovered that the decay of public morals caused by the constant influx of criminals was sapping the very vitals of their bodies politic, and they therefore determined that they would have no more of them, and, with the exception of Western Australia, which still receives a small number, and of South Australia, which never was a penal settlement at all, the Australian colonies refused to receive what has been aptly termed our "moral sewage." As these dependencies possessed the power to enforce this refusal, the mother country was obliged to yield, and thus to retain her criminals within her own shores.

In order to meet this exigency, the Legislature in 1853 passed

an Act, creating a new punishment, called penal servitude, as a substitute for transportation; and this punishment consists of imprisonment and hard labour, with the provision that if the convict behaves well, he will be allowed to quit the prison before the expiration of his legal sentence, and remain at large so long as he shall obey certain regulations with which he is furnished. This permission or licence is commonly known as the "ticket-of-leave." On it are printed the conditions to be observed by its holder: from these we extract the following important paragraph:—

"To produce a forfeiture of the licence it is by no means necessary that the holder should be convicted of any new offence. If he associates with notoriously bad characters, leads an idle or dissolute life, or has no visible means of obtaining an honest livelihood, it will be assumed that he is about to relapse into crime; and he will at once be apprehended and re-committed to prison under his original sentence."

This condition—stringent enough, one would think, to send the ticket-holder back to prison before he could have time or power to commit a new offence—has never been enforced in England. Incredible as this may appear, it is unfortunately quite true, and in consequence of this rule a vast amount of crime has been committed, and a still more vast amount of misery inflicted, which ought and might have been avoided.

Many reasons have been put forward to defend this extraordinary mode of proceeding on the part of the Home Office, which department has the direction of all the Government prisons, but they have hardly been more successful than the one we ourselves heard alleged at the Social Science Congress, by one of the speakers in the reformatory section, who seemed deeply imbued with the excellency of the system pursued in this country with regard to convict management. He said that the Secretary of State could not get up in his place in Parliament, and uphold the revocation of tickets-of-leave, without the commission on the part of their holders of some new offence. But if he cannot do this, considering the stringent conditions printed on each licence, he must be able to rise in his place in Parliament, and justify the printing on every ticket-of-leave of that which the holder of the ticket knows perfectly well to be a falsehood,—a task we should think infinitely harder to accomplish! It will therefore appear that the ticket-of-leave, intended by the Legislature as a protection to the public, has, through the maladministration of the Executive, proved nothing but a mockery, a delusion, and a snare.

Speaking in round numbers, there are about 2000 convicts annually set at liberty in this country, and we learn from a work entitled "Observations on the Treatment of Convicts in Ireland,"

from very careful calculations based upon the different data it has been in the power of the author to collect, that "in all probability at least half of the ticket-of-leave men have returned more or less to crime." This book is the result of a minute examination of the Irish convict prisons by four West Riding magistrates, who are also visiting justices of Wakefield Prison—a part of which jail has for many years been let to the Government for the reception of convicts, *i.e.*, men sentenced to penal servitude.

We have stated that about 2000 convicts are annually discharged at home, at least half of whom relapse into crime. We may therefore conclude that nearly 1000 of these set at liberty ravage the land, and commit outrages on their fellow-creatures. If the Government were to lose 1000 tigers every year, we should say that the chiefs of such a government were only fit for Bedlam; but on a careful consideration on the subject, it may perhaps appear that the tigers would not be much more injurious to us than are the ticket-of-leave men. Besides, we are all fully informed of the ravages tigers commit, and we could more easily take measures of protection against these wild beasts than we can insure ourselves against the evil designs of creatures bearing outwardly the form of men, but who are inwardly ravening wolves. "By their fruits ye shall know them." Indeed, we have to our cost *known* them by this test.

It may be objected that it would be impossible to discover when a ticket-of-leave man was about to commit crime. The legislators who passed the Penal Servitude Act, however, had no doubts on this point. The ticket-of-leave-holder may, say the objectors, have conducted himself well in jail, conforming with cheerful submission to the prison rules. He may leave it, protesting that he is ashamed of his former courses, and giving every promise that in future he intends to live honestly. Is such a man to be followed, his actions spied into by the police, and on mere suspicion is he to be dragged before a magistrate, and without proof of actual wrong-doing is he to be ruthlessly thrust into prison? Surely such a course of treatment is not compatible with the freedom which is the inheritance of every British subject. This objection, however, is conclusively answered by the observation that these ticket-of-leave-holders are not *free* men. They are actually under sentence of penal servitude, and are only allowed to be at large experimentally, and on condition of their obeying certain rules; and in order that the authorities may be satisfied that these regulations are observed, a certain amount of surveillance must be exercised. This should be no more onerous on the licence-holder than the safety of the public demands.

It is, however, needless to indulge in theoretically defending a principle, when we can point to its complete success in practice.

The law with regard to ticket-of-leave men is exactly the same in England as in Ireland, yet its administration has been so totally different in the two islands, that while in one it has been a complete success, and has gained the full confidence of the nation, in the other it has through maladministration, or, more correctly speaking, non-administration, become nothing short of a byword and term of reproach.

In Ireland, Sir Walter Crofton, by his unfailing revocation of all licenses whose holders did not fulfil the conditions endorsed upon them, and by his application of police supervision over all ticket-of-leave men, has so won the confidence of the Irish public in his power of restraining convicts, that there is actually a greater demand by employers for these men when discharged on ticket-of-leave than the prisons can supply. And if such happy results can be obtained in Ireland, why cannot they in England?

We have drawn a comparison in the last page between ticket-of-leave men and tigers, and we might in consequence lead our readers to suppose that we consider the men as dangerous to the safety of the public as these terrible wild beasts doubtless would be, and as long as they remain unreformed, we do so consider them; but we are entirely and radically opposed to the doctrine that these unhappy creatures are *irreformable*. The writer of this, who has had the great advantage of personal acquaintance with such men as Captain Maconochie, Mr. Demetz, and Sir Walter Crofton, and who has known what they have done, would be obtuse indeed if he could for a moment doubt that it is perfectly practicable to reform all but a small proportion of criminals. Unfortunately, in the convict prisons of this country, though the outlay of money is enormous, the means for reforming their unhappy inmates have not been employed; and after the brutalising process of association with men as bad, and sometimes worse than themselves, it is not surprising that when these men receive their tickets-of-leave (which are given, not as a reward for good conduct, as the Legislature intended, but only as a result of a certain period of imprisonment passed without flagrant misconduct) they are still more demoralised, and greater slaves to their evil passions than when they were committed to prison.

Want of space precludes us from entering into any details of the system employed by Sir Walter Crofton in Ireland. Suffice it to say that he makes known to every convict on his entrance to prison, that his time of quitting it, and his position during his incarceration, will depend entirely upon himself. If he will use his best endeavours to do right, and in consequence enable himself to pass the rigid tests to which every convict is subjected, he will gradually improve his condition in prison. Discipline, by degrees—as the criminal is found able to bear relaxation without

backsliding—will become less and less harsh, until he has fairly earned his ticket-of-leave. If he stubbornly refuse to follow the dictates of better feeling, he is retained in prison until the expiration of his sentence. Cases, however, like these latter are rare. Some convicts require a much longer time than others to regain their liberty, but there are comparatively few who altogether fail in earning their licences. But the ticket-holder is still responsible to the authorities. He must report himself once a month to the chief of police in his district, and if he change his domicile he must carefully report such change to the same officer. If he fail in the slightest degree in the strict observance of this rule, he is at once relegated to prison. It is only on the expiration of the sentence passed upon him by the judge, that he is a perfectly free man. It has often been asserted that this police supervision destroys all chance of the convict's obtaining an honest livelihood. The prison ban is upon him, his fellow-creatures shun him, no master will employ him, he must steal in order that he may live. But all these objections have been proved in practice to be utterly futile. Masters will and do employ ticket-of-leave men, knowing, as they know in Ireland, that they are protected from danger by this very police supervision; and the licence-holders themselves do not find it burdensome. If they are really striving to live honestly, the supervision is a protection to them. If they fall into suspicion, they can refer to the police, who are acquainted with their history from the date of their discharge, and are easily able to say whether or no they are innocent.

The system has worked admirably well in Ireland, and there is not the slightest reason to doubt its working equally well in England. The Irish convicts once held the unenviable distinction of being the worst of their class. Surely, if the system has been so effective in reclaiming them, we may hope it will be as successful with a superior raw material to work on. At any rate, things are now so bad in this country that the people have a right to demand that a system hitherto so successful should at least be tried. We know by experience, that when the English nation arises in its strength, its behests are obeyed. We would then ask how long the nation will permit the ticket-of-leave system to be a sham—a system only in name; how long the mission of ticket-of-leave men shall be to rob, pillage, and murder their fellow-countrymen and countrywomen. How long shall men and women, who in nine cases out of ten have first sinned through ignorance, be made worse in our convict prisons? When will the nation arise, and say such a scandal shall cease? When will it declare that the end to be attained by all jurisprudence shall be the protection of the public; and the means to that end the reformation of the offender?

MANOR MELLERAY

CHAPTER XIX.

AT MANOR MELLERAY.

ARTHUR LEVISON was staying at the Duke of Winterhaven's place in Sorrelshire when he received a telegram from Manor Melleray, stating that his mother was dangerously ill. He started for home at once, and arrived there at night. It was in the first week of December. The night was cold, and there was snow on the ground. As he was divesting himself of his overcoat in the hall, Evelyn came out of a warm, well-lighted room on the left, smiling, and with her two hands outstretched, which he took possession of at once. Her face told him that there was an improvement since the morning, when the telegram had been despatched, and the eager welcome, the girlish, feminine figure, the warm little hands, the *frôlement* of her dress, were all very pleasant—speaking of home.

"She is a great deal better. I knew you would be so uneasy when Mr. Draper sent that message, but she is a great deal better. We are all so happy. Mr. Draper thinks all danger is passed; and she is sleeping so nicely. You cannot go to her just yet," and then she took him into the comfortable room, where there was a great fire, and an elegant little supper laid out, and there she told him how it had happened.

It was late on the previous night that the first symptoms of change appeared. She did not sleep, but her eyes grew dull, and her voice, when she spoke, was thick, and so different from usual, and her mouth fell away to one side. Greatly alarmed, Evelyn and the housekeeper decided to send into Darneath for Mr. Draper. It was about one o'clock when he arrived, for he lost no time, and Lady Elizabeth was in much the same state, but she spoke none. Towards morning she became worse. Her eyes had quite a glassy look, her features became pale and rigid, and they all thought she was going to die. At the same time that he was sending for her son, Mr. Draper telegraphed for two great London practitioners, knowing that such would be his wish, and they arrived very soon, and had a consultation with the Darneath doctor. Blisters were put behind the ears and to the back of the head, and sundry other things were done; and after she had continued about three-quarters of an hour in a state of stupor, her teeth locked and her eyes wide open, but apparently without sight in them, she gradually recovered. At mid-day there was an evident improvement, and all the afternoon she had



been getting slowly better, and she spoke for the first time a couple of hours before Mr. Levison arrived.

"And she is ever so well now, and quite conscious," said the sanguine Evelyn, "and Sir Evan Brock and the other are gone back to London, but Mr. Draper is to let Sir Evan know how she goes on, and he will return to-morrow, I believe—that is, if she is not a great deal better; but I am sure she will be. She was speaking to me about you before she went asleep, and saying what a pity that message had been sent to you."

"Why so?"

"Oh, to have brought you all that way, and she so much better—almost well, in fact. And you must have been so startled at her being taken so suddenly ill!"

"Yes; but what must it have been to you?" said he, looking at her earnestly.

"I was frightened, indeed; especially before Mr. Draper came. Shall I go and see if she is awake?"

To this he assented, and she tripped out of the room, and in a few minutes returned, her face beaming.

"Oh, she is awake and so well! Rachel tells me she awoke about half an hour ago, and asked for you just about the very time that you must have arrived. But, Mr. Levison," here she came up to him with a grave expression on the young face, "I wish you would not appear to think that she had been in any danger, you know, as it would put her down. I don't know how she heard of that message being sent to you, but it quite frightened her. She fancied herself in a dreadful state all to-day, and would not believe any one but that she was going to die, although Sir Evan himself told her that she was going to get better."

And Mr. Levison promised to be cautious, and he took her hand and pressed it, and whispered, "God bless you!" But he did not say any more then. And after that she took him to Lady Elizabeth.

She was lying in bed propped up with pillows. There was little change in her face; she looked just the same as before he went away; her face was always pale, and it was pale still, perhaps the only change in it being that there was a slight fulness about the mouth, as if that part was swollen. But this might have been only her way of holding it, as if she found some difficulty in keeping the lips closed. Her eyes sparkled at sight of him, and he came and kissed her.

"So you have been ill, mother," he said.

"I was very bad, Arthur; I think I was near dying, though little Linnie won't let me say that," she replied, in her usual voice, low and sweet, but it was a little weaker, perhaps; "where is

she? I thought she came in with you; but she is so constantly in my mind that I may have only imagined it."

"She did, mother, come in with me—you were quite right; but she is gone back into your dressing-room."

"I wish she could be made to go to bed. She remained up all night, so Rachel tells me. Rachel and the others thought to make her go to bed, but she would not. Even I can remember, for I had not quite lost consciousness then, although I could not speak—I remember her sitting there, so quiet and watchful, and keeping all the others quite under her command; and Rachel heard that London doctor, Sir Evan Brock, I believe, saying that she is a blessing in a sick room. I am telling Arthur about you, darling," she said, as Evelyn made her appearance.

"What are you telling him?—you know you are not to fatigue yourself with speaking."

"What is that you have got now? Arthur, she is my tyrant;—she makes me take such nasty things. I think nobody could get me to take them but she."

"That speaks well for the tyrant," said he, as he moved back a little to let Evelyn administer the medicine.

"You were to have taken it fully forty minutes ago, but you were asleep then, and sleep is the best medicine."

"Yes. What is this Macbeth calls it—'Balm of hurt minds; chief nourisher in life's feast.' It has been a good friend to me, though a little shy sometimes. Did I sleep long?"

"Rachel says for more than an hour, though I did not think so much. And you seem to be still better now."

"I *am* better. There!" and she drank the dose. "It is very bitter, Linnie. What it is to be sick! I never took medicine until now, though I was always ailing. To think they should so startle you, dear." This was to Arthur.

"I wish I had been at home, mother," said he, in a low tone.

"What need was there? They took good care of me; and as to Linnie——"

"Oh! I know as to Linnie," said he, repeating the petting term without thinking; but as soon as he had spoken it, he looked at her, and she coloured. Lady Elizabeth, however, took no notice beyond a faint smile. Then she said, suddenly—

"Do you know, Arthur, I often wonder why she should call you Mr. Levison. It sounds so stiff, doesn't it? I tell her that you should be Arthur to her and me."

He looked at his mother in surprise, but she was perfectly serious. After a minute's thought, he knew the meaning of it, and a very sad feeling took possession of him. Draper had told him a few months before that she might have paralysis in the brain even-

tually, and this it was that had come upon her. All her anxiety about him and Evelyn was forgotten, at least for the present; but he was not one to take advantage of that.

"She thinks it would scarcely be seeming as I am her guardian," he said, gravely. "Eh, Evelyn, is it so?"

She murmured a faint little "Yes," busying herself with the various bottles on the table.

"But I do not see that," Lady Elizabeth persisted. "I cannot bear to hear my little pet saying 'Mr. Levison'; it seems to make such a distance between you. Don't you think she might call you Arthur? It couldn't so much matter, I fancy, and I should like it."

"Then, if so, I am sure she will," said he, to humour her, and somewhat amused at Evelyn's perplexed face. "Now, remember, young lady, I am not to be 'Mr. Levison' any more. What shall we do to her, mother, if she transgresses?"

"Oh! she won't, if you desire her, Arthur," she replied. "I spoke of it to her this evening, when we were expecting you, but she reasoned me out of my senses."

Hereupon Evelyn took occasion to leave the room, and she did not return to it again until he had parted with his mother for the night.

Now, she knew the meaning of this just as much as he did, and the tears were blinding her as she made her way out through the dressing-room. If Lady Elizabeth were quite well, she would not have spoken thus. Evelyn knew that intuitively. She remembered certain things which had happened before he went away, which told her plainly that it was Lady Elizabeth's object to keep them separate; and there was something peculiarly painful in hearing her speak thus, for it showed that her memory was lamentably shattered.

For more than a week after the young man returned, she continued in much the same state, mentally and physically. It was one of the phases of her disease, this forgetfulness. Sometimes she would commence a sentence, and before she finished it, forget what she meant to say, and she would remark, plaintively, "Oh! there, it is gone out of my head; I'll think of it some other time." Often she spoke in such a rambling, unconnected way, that to avoid annoying her, they would pretend to understand what she was saying, and then suddenly she would recover all her faculties, and exclaim, "No, it is not that, but—no matter;" or, "There is no use in trying to understand me; I never will speak sensibly again, I do believe;" and then Evelyn would exclaim, impetuously, "Indeed you will, and it's quite easy to understand you; and, oh! pray—pray, do not be thinking such things: I cannot bear it!"

Then, suddenly, in the course of the second week, she became quite well apparently, was clear and bright as before, and able to be helped into her boudoir; and from that she at length ventured to descend only a few steps away—to the pink drawing-room. And here the three spent some pleasant hours together. During that week in which her faculties had remained clouded Arthur had avoided her young companion as much as possible—to be sure, as he naturally spent a good deal of time with his mother daily, and she scarcely ever left her, they were still somewhat thrown together—and he kept a strict guard over himself, not so much in view of his marriage, but because he remembered her wishes, and held them doubly sacred when they were no longer patent to herself. But now that she was quite well, he did not, perhaps, see the necessity for so much reserve, for he allowed himself to find a good deal of pleasure in Evelyn's society, for which, however, he would often call himself to task afterwards. But there was not any way then of avoiding the temptation.

Oh! the pleasant hours of that month, the last those three people were to spend together. Death and separation would soon do their work, and the pleasant Manor Melleray household would be broken up. But they could not foresee that, except in so far as Mr. Levison's marriage might be expected to make a change. Lady Elizabeth was very much better, almost well, they thought; but she was very far from that. They could see that she was very feeble, but that seemed to be the only remains of her illness, and they were all very pleasant during this time. Letitia wrote often to know how her mother was going on. She could not come to see her, for about this time her little son was born, and Arthur told his mother of it, reading out the letter for her; and each of them knew that, if wanting, another link was added to the chain which bound him to marry Miss Challis. And now, that cloud having cleared off her faculties, Lady Elizabeth was once more possessed by her old anxiety. She felt that she would soon die, and it would be a great satisfaction to her to know that he was engaged to Miss Challis before that happened. What was to become of her little pet, was a subject of anxious thought to her. She guessed that he intended she should live with them at Challis Haugh, that is, if he gave it any thought, or believed that his mother was dying; for she was sometimes led to believe that he was mistaken about her health, fancying that she would recover; but if the question were put to him, she had good reason to expect that he would arrange for Evelyn to live with them at Challis Haugh, and for more reasons than one, she did not approve of that. It was more than likely that his wife would not like it, and it was quite possible she would have some reason therefor. There did not seem much prospect of

Evelyn being very happy, situated thus; and, if not that, what other house was open to her? There was Letitia's; but, somehow, Lady Elizabeth did not like that either. What a pity that Mr. Casilis made that will!—that she must not see Arthur and Evelyn married and settled happily here at Manor Melleray; that would please her indeed. But now it was ordained otherwise, she must speak to him about Evelyn's future home, before death took her, Evelyn's best friend, from her. Alas, if the girl knew her thoughts, how distressed she would be! Lady Elizabeth never hinted at the near prospect of her death to either of them; and Arthur seemed to be as much deceived by that fictitious improvement as Evelyn. She had no great reason for believing that she was in danger, but she had a presentiment that it was so, and the event proved it to be correct. Her chief anxiety was not so much about Evelyn's destination, however, but that he would engage himself to Sydney; and if she died soon, there was no knowing what he would be tempted to do, finding Evelyn thrown on his hands altogether, and, especially in that period, so susceptible of mutual tenderness, when they would be drawn more together by reason of their grief for her. As she thought over this, she saw, with woman's instinct, that the occasion would be full of temptation, and it was ten chances to one he would, in a moment of blind passion, ask her to marry him; and what likelihood was there that a girl of Evelyn's age and character would be able to resist such a man as he? And yet in this Lady Elizabeth misjudged her pet; for this very occasion she so wisely foresaw actually came to pass, and Evelyn, though tried as in a furnace, proved in the end equal to it. But now her whole mind was intent on inducing him to go to Spas Richie whilst she was so well, and propose for Miss Challis. Sydney had left Spas Richie in November, and gone to a house she had near Challis Haugh, where she resided with a first cousin of hers, who was a widow, by name Mrs. Extern, and who would keep house with her until after her marriage. But Mrs. Extern had gone to London to some friend of hers for the Christmas, and Letitia had written to Sydney to spend the Christmas with them, so she was there now. Arthur had changed his mind about going to Spas Ritchie, and had gone to his friend Winterhaven's instead, to have some hunting in the best hunting county in England, having written an excuse to Mr. Rothesay, saying that he would go to them at Christmas. Perhaps Letitia had this in view when she invited her friend to spend that festival with her. It was scarcely polite of Mr. Levison, seeing that he knew perfectly well that both his sister and Miss Challis expected him at the time; but he was not in the best of humours, and did not care particularly to please either of them. But his promise was a fair excuse at the present moment for Lady

Elizabeth to bring the matter about ; she had, of course, heard of it from Letitia. So she drew it on one day that she sent Evelyn out to take a ride, accompanied by Harris. She had taken many a ride with the same protection during her guardian's absence, and had never once encountered Trefanin ; and the total absence of any news of her mother was a source of much uneasiness to her. Since Mr. Levison returned, she was planning with herself to ask him about her, but, as yet, she had not done so.

It was now in Christmas week. Lady Elizabeth was still pretty well, but something was warning her she was near another attack like that she had in the beginning of the month, and with such a feeble constitution as hers it was quite possible it would be too much for her. On the day in question she was nervous and low, anxious about Evelyn, and the task she had set herself was a peculiarly unpleasant one. It was hard that she must annoy him just then with this question, remembering with what decision he had spoken before ; and if he consented this time, it was hard that she must send him away from her again, now, when she knew more than ever that the day was quickly approaching on which they must part for ever. And since her recovery from that dreadful attack, they had all been so happy together there. Those days and hours were very precious to her, passing away so fast, slipping through her fingers as drops of water through a sieve. How short they seemed ; how quickly over ! At night she would say, " Another day gone into eternity ; another day less that I must spend with them. And the last day will come, and the day after that last one, when I shall be a thing of the past. Oh, my God, I could not regret it for myself, for I am going to Thee ; but I know their grief will be great ; and oh, comfort them—comfort them ! If I could see my little Linnie—but she will be in Thy hands, my God ! Into Thy holy keeping I will commit her ! "

What made her feel the near prospect of her death more was that both Arthur and Evelyn seemed to be ignorant of her state, and believed that she was actually better. She had thought of asking Mr. Draper to enlighten him, but now that she saw the necessity of speaking to him about his own and Evelyn's future movements, she knew that it must come from herself.

" I wanted to ask you, Arthur," she began, when they were alone, " what Evelyn is to do when—when I am gone ? "

He started, and did not answer at once ; then he said, gloomily—

" What is the use in speaking of that, mother ? "

" I think it is necessary to speak of it," she replied, in a grave voice, " it is best we should all be prepared. I do not think I have long to live." She paused, but as he made no answer she continued. " I have thought a good deal about this, and what will be

the best thing for Evelyn. It is natural I should be anxious about her, as when I am dead she will have no one—that is ——”

“No, mother, I cannot talk of it now,” he exclaimed, impetuously. “Let us leave it to some other day, I beg of you. You have taken me by surprise. Why, she would kill herself with fretting to have only to think of it—that child; when it can be so—hard upon me!” and then he stood up and drew away a little from her, turning towards the window.

“Really, Arthur, I thought you were a man, and I find you are only a soft-hearted boy still.” And she strove to make her words a reproach, but her lips trembled uttering them. “You ought to have been prepared for this, for no one could suppose that I was going to get well. It must come sooner or later, and it is wise to become used to the idea. And as to Evelyn ——” but here again he interrupted her.

“You have broken it to me now; and as you advise, I’ll keep the thought before me. But, mother dear, don’t say any more about it to-day. It’s a—an uncommon shock, I must say. I did believe you were getting better. I suppose her sanguine spirits took possession of me, and who knows?—you shouldn’t give way to those fancies; you were always nervous, mother; and it may be that you are not so bad as you think. I’ll have that man, Brock, come here to-morrow and hear what he’ll say.”

“I know what he’ll say very well; that I am going on favourably. It is something in myself that tells me the truth, Arthur. You may think it is fancy, but I believe firmly that I shall be dead before—very long. Perhaps, being so near the grave, some of the light from beyond it is vouchsafed to me, so that I know my own state better than others can. Or it may be that Death sends a herald to warn the soul, so that it may not be unprepared for his approach. Whatever it be, I have that belief so firm, that no doctor’s verdict could change it. And now, dear boy, the idea is no longer fresh to you, and you will allow me to speak of it.” Her voice was soft and caressing, as if addressing an ailing child; and she paused a little then, as if to give him time to let it enter his mind. “When I tell you that I am continually harrassed with anxiety about Evelyn, you will, I know. All I wish to say is, to ask you what you intend for her when that will happen.”

“I could have no intention,” he replied, moodily, “as I did not foresee this. I suppose she will live with us at Challis Haugh, if that comes to pass—I mean my marriage with Miss Challis. If it does not, I needn’t tell you what will be the order of things.”

“No, Arthur, you need not; but would it not be well to banish all hope of that? There is nothing more fatal than those delusive hopes. They unfit the mind for the stern reality. As to

Evelyn's living at Challis Haugh, do you think that would be a wise arrangement? I only ask your opinion, for I myself see no other at present."

"It would not do," said he, with slow emphasis; "at least, for some time—no, never, if I don't want to—— She might stay with Letitia—bah!—in truth, mother! it is a difficult thing! She'll lose her best friend in you if that is to be."

Then there was silence between them for a few minutes, and at length Lady Elizabeth said—

"'God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb.' All will be well I believe and hope. Is not her father——"

"He doesn't care a straw for her," said Arthur. "He never spoke of her even once, though I met him half-a-dozen times whilst I was in India. Yes, he is come home, and if he came here to-morrow I wouldn't give her to him any more than I would to that poor woman who calls herself Mrs. Sandringham. And, by-the-bye, I wonder what has become of her? I called at Radnor-row before I went to Winterhaven's, and she had left it. I hope she's done nothing desperate. I pity her, from my heart I do!" Then, after another little pause, he added, "Upon my word, I do not see any other way. Evelyn must stay with us, mother. If she's not to be my wife, she must be my sister; and perhaps in time I might bring myself to think of a suitable match for her."

He was leaning against the chimney-piece as he said this, and pulling his tawny beard somewhat fiercely, his eyes fixed on her face. She made no answer at once, but looked gravely thoughtful. Then he came over and stood before her.

"You will have confidence enough in your son to leave her to him?" he said, with a manly humility that touched her.

"Yes, Arthur, most assuredly; but—what will your wife say—will she like it, think you?"

"I cannot say; very likely not. She might be jealous, though Heaven knows she would have little reason. If I were once married, Evelyn would be as sacred to me, in thought even, as it she were a saint in heaven. And now, mother, shall we consider this matter settled? For my part, I believe that there is not so much reason for your anxiety; with God's help you will be spared to her for a long time yet."

She was silent, but not convinced. When she said that she would trust him she spoke truly; but yet there were many things in that arrangement to disquiet her—things which it was scarcely feasible to explain to him. In the first place, it would not be good for Evelyn, take it in any light; and then, whatever he might think now, it would scarcely tend to the happiness of the married pair. But for the present she let it rest thus, it was more im-

portant just then to induce him to engage himself to Sydney. And she asked him to do so, making it appear that she meant to ask it of him as a favour, reminding him of his promise to go to Spas Richie, and that this would be the best time now that she was so well. "And as to Miss Challis," she said, "let me remind you that it is now the end of December; next week will be January, and all preparations will want to have been made before May. I suppose it is in that month you will be married, as you must be husband and wife, according to the terms of the will, before the tenth of June. And consider, Arthur, it is treating her very badly, you know. She is to be your wife—there can be no doubt whatever now about that, and she has a claim to your respect. But it was not *that* I meant to say to you so much as this. It would be a very great satisfaction to me to know that the matter was settled. I am very well now, but how can we know how long that will continue? and should anything happen to me, I could die happily if I knew that you were engaged to Miss Challis."

"Well, mother, I see you have set your heart upon this, and I will propose for her soon. But you must not be talking of dying. As you are indispensable here, I hope you will not be called away yet."

"It must be as God wills," she said, tapping him on the cheek as he lay on the sofa beside her, having, in compliance with a motion of hers, taken that place in order to be near her. "But to our '*moutons*' that 'soon' is very indefinite. What do you mean by it? In two days or two weeks—which?"

"Or two months, mother? Let it be so, then. In two months—if nothing turns up in the meantime—I'll ask Miss Challis to be my wife. *Il n'est guère donné à l'homme de pousser la vertu plus loin.*"

"Now, Arthur, that is not right; and the two months will not do. I mean that I am going to ask you to make the interval a great deal shorter. I am going to ask you, Arthur, to do it at once," and she turned round and looked at him earnestly. "You will not refuse me, your mother, I know. It will make very little difference to you, and it will make me very happy. I shall not mind when death comes then. When you and Miss Challis are promised to each other I shall have an easy mind. You know well why; it is for Evelyn's sake; and I believe you are unselfish enough to be influenced by that more than if I had said it was for your own good."

"Unselfish enough! What a way you put it, *ma belle mère*! There is no beating a lady for that sort of thing. You would not say 'I believe you love her well enough to value her happiness before your own.' But you need not have said that, or even what you did say. It is enough that you wish it, mother. I'll do it."

When I told Letitia that I'd go at Christmas, I couldn't foresee that you would be ill. However, I'll only stay there a couple of days. I must make your mind easy at all costs. It's no use talking of what I hoped. I believe it is pretty plain now that the man is dead; but whether he is or not, I'll do this for you. I could not refuse you anything if you asked, after what you said to-day. But, mother, I am not going to say that I believe that, and I will attach one condition to my consent—there is to be no more talking or thinking of this subject. It will make you anxious about Evelyn, if it will have no other effect. I have no doubt that you will be spared for a long time yet. And now, I'll start to-morrow. There! it would be worth while doing it, if only to bring that smile. Why you look positively handsome, and well, too! When I return I must see it again, for I think I shall have deserved it."

And when he returned to Manor Melleray, a few days after that, he was the betrothed husband of Miss Challis.

CHAPTER XX.

MRS. CARNEGIE SPEAKS HER MIND.

RALPH escorted his mother to Lord Cheneys house. They arrived there precisely at one, for she was resolved to be punctual, and had left her own humble domicile twenty minutes before that, as it would take that length of time to reach it by walking. The sergeant had given her all needful instructions before he took his leave, and she was to ask the footman to be shown to Mrs. Carnegie. He could not come to bring her himself, for he would be on duty this day. Only for that, he would have done so, to introduce her to his sister, he said. But Mrs. Sandringham declared that was not necessary. Mrs. Carnegie would soon know who she was, and what was her business, and that was all she required. You see she was bent on disclaiming the dignity with which the honest sergeant would hedge her round, and would show him that she was resolved to be seen by the light of her own poor circumstances, and by no other. The fact that she was a lady still was the cause of impatient annoyance to her, rather than of rejoicing. It seemed a mockery to be treating her as a lady, and she only a poor needlewoman; but the sergeant had no thought of mocking her, his behaviour was the result of pure respect, and the involuntary homage of a mind of his stamp to such as hers, and, without being flattered by it, she approved the sergeant in her heart for so feeling.

And so she walked to the square, escorted by her drummer-boy. When they reached the house Ralph looked up at it with

awe. "So grand, so immense! What a great man is he who lives here!" but when the door was opened by a giant in livery, with powdered head and pompous face, and eyes that seemed incapable even of looking down to one of his low degree, but which fixed themselves on the top of his mother's bonnet, as if they disdained to look into her face, and remained there whilst they stood timidly before him, he immediately concluded that it was Lord Cheneys himself had condescendingly opened the door, and gave him a military salute in great style, which, however, elicited no response from the colossus in livery. Mrs. Sandringham was slightly disconcerted by his immovable aspect, and his not even asking their business. Was he struck dumb at the magnitude of their audacity in daring to give him the trouble of opening the door for them. Unlike Ralph, she knew well that it was the footman, and she recovered herself immediately, and stated her business with quiet dignity.

"Mrs. Carnegie, ma'am, is engaged," said he, in a mild enough tone, although he maintained the same high demeanour. Perhaps her voice had softened him in spite of himself.

"But she appointed one o'clock to see me. If you will please tell her who it is—Mrs. Sandringham, the person her brother recommended to do the fine work—I think she'll scarcely refuse to see me, and I have come a long way, quite from the other side of the City. You'll do me a great favour by asking her to let me speak to her."

"Well, we'll see. I'll shut the door, please (they were standing on the threshold still). Come in, you may sit here. This your son? A soldier—yes," and he looked with supreme contempt on poor Ralph, which fired the boy at once. The instant he spoke, he knew it was not Lord Cheneys, or any other lord he was confronting.

"Yes, a soldier," said Ralph, with blazing cheeks; "it's a better livery than your's, isn't it?"

"That's good!—you're a hot'un, I see. Come, my fine chap, be quiet now, or out you go. This your son, Mrs. What-do-you-call-em? You ought to teach him better manners, so that he'd know his betters next time."

"You're not my betters!" Ralph was bursting out with hotly, but his mother put her hand on his arm, turning to the footman at the same time.

"Sandringham, and please tell her the person her brother spoke of, and I was to call at one o'clock. I am sure, if you ask her, Mrs. Carnegie will receive me. You ought to have more sense, dear," she added to Ralph, as the servant stalked away sulkily, impressed, he knew not how, by her manner. In her quiet way she had spoken with a dignity and composure which invariably impress

people of that class, and there was a slight ring of authority, too, in her tone. Submissive as she appeared, she was not one to endure affront, and the gigantic footman revered "pluck," as he called it. His anger at Ralph speedily dissolved, for was not he a boy? He returned in a few minutes, and conducted her to the housekeeper, taking no notice of Ralph beyond a derisive grin. He was to wait for his mother, as she could not find her way back without him, and the giant motioned him to stay in the hall, his fellow, who seemed the exact counterpart of himself, pacing to and fro on the rich mosaic, and throwing him a glance of cool curiosity now and then. But Ralph was busy admiring the magnificence of everything, his own plush breeches into the bargain, and had no objection to be stared at. He could stand anything but a slight upon his profession; that he would not put up with.

Mrs. Sandringham was shown through spacious corridors, and along divers passages, and by what seemed innumerable doors; and, at last, into a comfortable, almost luxurious room, the housekeeper's own. The atmosphere was so nice and warm, with a pleasant fire in the grate; and there was a bright carpet on the floor, and the remains of a substantial lunch on the table, and, altogether, Mrs. Carnegie, the sergeant's sister, might be said to be in a flourishing way. She was seated at the farther side of the table, and looked up as the footman said, "This is she, Mrs. Carnegie," making as if he would take hold of her visitor's arm to show her in, but that Mrs. Sandringham prevented by stepping hastily into the room, and bringing herself at once into the view of the housekeeper.

A plump, apparently medium-sized woman, youngish-looking, about forty, with a fat face, rosy cheeks, and good brown eyes, which looked, however, at present, somewhat coldly on her visitor, and a large mouth primly tightened with a sense of importance, which somehow was in odd contrast with the rest of her face, to which a rather good-natured expression would seem to be habitual,—this was Mrs. Carnegie.

"Well?" she said, without moving, and fixing the brown eyes sharply on the other. "Oh, you are the person Peter spoke of. And what can you do, pray?"

"I thought he mentioned that he had told you what my employment was," said Mrs. Sandringham, standing meekly before her, and a slight flush rising into her face.

"I believe he did, but I am not sure. I can't think of all those things, you know. A person in my position has a great deal to think of; Peter is so queer, he expects one to do the most out-of-the-way things. Now, of course you don't expect great terms on account of the house and that. There being no mistress, I must look sharp about these things."

"I am willing to do the work on whatever terms you like. If it pleases you, you will, I suppose, pay me well."

"That depends. It's a very out-of-the-way thing giving the work to such as you, you know. I didn't speak of it to Lady Eastlawn, not but what she'd leave it to me, to be sure, but she'd scarcely approve of it. She'd say it wasn't respectable."

"If you fear to displease her by employing me, perhaps it would be better that you should not do so. I should be sorry to injure any one," said Mrs. Sandringham, the flush fading out of her face, and her eyes beginning to brighten a little. She was still standing, but her figure was held erect, and although there was no pride in her look, there was a good deal of self-possession.

"Oh, that's not the question," said the housekeeper, eyeing her sharply, and her lips turned down a little at the corners, as if in contempt at the idea of "this person" asserting herself in such a manner. "I'm, I may say, my own mistress now, for Lord Cheneys leaves everything to me; and as to displeasing Lady Eastlawn, I think, for one who knows so little about it, it's rather presuming of you to say so. And now we will come to business, please," said Mrs. Carnegie, with a sharp rap of her knuckles on the table. "As I gave my brother the promise, I'm not going to go back of my word, although it certainly is not respectable doing things in this way. You'll excuse my plain speaking, but you see a person in my position must be particular, and you'll not object to my asking a few questions, I hope. I can see you are something better than the common sort. Were you always at this work, pray?"

It came out so suddenly and unexpectedly that Mrs. Sandringham, utterly unprepared for the question, blushed like a girl. But she recovered herself instantaneously, and bit her lips, and actually seemed to force back the blood out of her face, for it recovered its beautiful pallor, and the deep, dark eyes were raised to the housekeeper's with a quiet courage which, in itself, the latter found a little tantalising.

"No!"

Brief enough, but neither curt nor defiant. It merely said, "I will answer your questions in so far as they suit me, but no farther." And, withal, the proud humility was in her look and voice far more telling, far more potent, than simple pride alone.

"And how long have you been at it?"

"About five years."

"And was it with your needle that you were earning your bread during that time?"

"Yes."

"Are you sure—I mean, are you sure that you have been telling me the truth?"

Now even Mrs. Carnegie, seated in stately composure in her comfortable room—housekeeper, mistress, everything—winced under the haughty stare of the poor needlewoman standing before her.

"I have answered your questions. If you will not believe me, I cannot help it. I never re-assert a fact for anyone's satisfaction."

"Well, it's extraordinary!" sneered the housekeeper, hotly and contemptuously. "A person in your condition making rules for yourself! I suppose you'll be telling me what work I ought to give you, and how much money you should get, and other things like that! You had better come down to your proper level, ma'am—or miss—whichever it is!"—(these words were spoken in a peculiarly irritating tone). "I must be satisfied as to your previous life before I can employ you for such a house as this. If my lord knew there was any disreputable person coming about his residence, he would be very angry. I don't mean to say that you are that," said the housekeeper, awed, in spite of herself, by the brief, angry flash of Mrs. Sandringham's eyes. "I don't know what you are, but there is a very unsatisfactory mysteriousness" (Mrs. Carnegie prided herself on her elegant expressions: "Jane's jawbreakers," the good Stokes called them) "about your way of answering, and I should be glad to know is there any person who could give a reference, if I chose to require one? My brother, of course, wouldn't do; soldiers are not that particular, and he's so good-natured he'd go bail for anybody."

"There is nobody in London knows me but Mrs. Caper," she replied, with due submissiveness, "my landlady. She lives in Fringe-street—a very backward place, and altogether out of your knowledge, I am sure. But I think she would be willing to vouch that, during the time I have lived with her, I have conducted myself honestly, soberly, and virtuously. I never was a servant-maid, although often much worse off than most servants are; but I think Mrs. Caper's recommendation would have served to get me a place, if I sought one,—not, to be sure, in such a house as this, but in a shop-keeper's, or places of that class,—for she is well thought of."

"Well, I believe I'll not ask one now," said Mrs. Carnegie, shortly, for she did not like the manner of the above answer. That it was humble, and satisfactory in matter, she could not deny; but still there was a racy pleasantness ringing through the low, soft voice, and a humorous curve on the small mouth, and her eyes were lowered as if to hide a twinkle, all of which seemed to point to the audacious fact that this "low person" was actually laughing at Mrs. Carnegie, Lord Cheneys' housekeeper, major domo, or whatever is the feminine for that, and representative, in brief.

"I don't want to bring the woman here; I suppose she has quite

enough to do in her 'trumpety place ; and of course, as to my going there, it is out of the question ; but I want to know, please—and it is quite necessary I *should* know, and I hope you'll speak plainly—what was the cause of your coming to be in such a poor way ; for you say that you were not always so. Those things mostly happen through people's own fault. Was it through yours ?”

“No !”

“And how was it, then ?”

“It wasn't through my fault ; it was caused by others.”

“Well, go on please ; how—how ?” and Mrs. Carnegie leaned forward with eager curiosity, for she had seen, at the first glance, that her visitor belonged to the class, or was not far from it once, amongst whom she herself might look for a mistress, and she hoped to learn all about her now. But this was detected, and destined at once to be disappointed.

“I decline to tell any more,” said Mrs. Sandringham, quietly.

She stared at her in amazement, which was quickly followed by indignation.

“And do you imagine that I'll be satisfied with that ?” asked the housekeeper, irefully.

“You appeared to doubt my words just now. If you really disbelieved me, what difference can it make that I decline to answer this last question of yours ? Of course I could tell you what I liked, all truth, or a story without a particle of truth in it ; and as I choose to risk displeasing you and losing employment, which would be meat and drink to me, rather than speak on a painful subject, I think that at least ought to convince you that I am honest, seeing that I could so very easily satisfy you without any trouble to myself. And if I am honest, is not that all you need require ? The relation of my past trials cannot make me more or less so, and it would be very unpleasant to me.”

“But to a person in my position, accustomed to plain dealing, and requiring to be so particular about who I employ, your manner of answering is very unsatisfactory, I must say,” rejoined the housekeeper, softened a little ; with all her stiffness and importance she was like her brother, a good-hearted creature at bottom ; and she was only gratifying a womanly relish for tyrannising over another, and especially when that other was one who evidently had the audacity to have been better born than herself. “I told Peter that I would require to know all about you, as he said that you were a person who had been reduced in circumstances. I suppose Sandringham is not your own name. Well, you wont answer that ?”

“It is my own name, but not my married name.”

“Ah, yes ! you are married, so Peter told me ; and you have a

son, and he is a soldier ; and why don't you bear your husband's name ?”

“ For reasons which cannot be explained without touching on that part of my history which I declined to speak of. But I will say this much. If those things were told to you I do not think you would refuse to employ me. There is not crime, nor mystery, nor any great interest, perhaps, but a good deal of suffering, and it is my object to forget that if I can.”

Mrs. Carnegie scanned her face closely. Peter was a simple-minded man. Could it be that he was taken in by an impostor, and that she was about to be taken in by an impostor too ? No ! narrow-minded and prudent as she was, she did not entertain the thought for an instant. There could be no mistaking the expression of the calm, pale face, the proud gleam of the eyes at different parts of their discourse. This was certainly an honest woman, and, moreover, a refined woman, too, whom she had been questioning so mercilessly, and kept standing all that time like a culprit before his judge.

“ Well, I suppose—it is not respectable, to be sure, and I dare say Lady Eastlawn would think that I ought to be more particular ; but as you say you have had grief, and that your husband was dead—I believe you said so ?” said Mrs. Carnegie, pausing with a doubtful expression on her plump, common-place face, as if trying to remember had such a fact been admitted or not.

“ I did not say that my husband is dead. At the present moment I do not know whether he is or not ;” and she met the other's glance, charged to the brim with feminine curiosity, steadily, her open, fearless glance betraying nothing more than what her words had told.

“ Then you are separated, perhaps ?” said the housekeeper, disappointed, but not entirely rebuffed yet.

“ Yes, in so far that I am living alone at Mrs. Caper's lodging, and he is—Heaven knows where ;” and she gave a brief sweep with her white, gloveless hand, which seemed to say “ wherever he is it is nothing to me.”

“ And do you expect ever to be reunited to him ?”

“ No, I do not expect anything. I do not look forward to the future. I gave that up years ago.”

“ She gave what up ?” thought Mrs. Carnegie, extremely puzzled by this lady-like needlewoman, with her queenly manner and way of speaking, and with that indefinable expression of hopelessness pervading her face, and wailing through her independent voice like an undertone of sorrow one sometimes hears in a grand piece of music. But she saw that she had just as much chance of raising the inscrutable veil which hid the past life

of this woman from her curious gaze, as she had of penetrating the blue sky of heaven to see what was beyond, and it would be more dignified to suppress her curiosity for the present than to receive another rebuff like the former one; so she resolved to ask no more questions. The answers had been more irritating than satisfactory. But Mrs. Carnegie was of the earth earthy, and it was in a slightly peevish tone that she said, "I don't understand what you gave up, or what you mean, you seem determined to puzzle me. However, it's no matter; I promised my brother I'd employ you, and I won't go back of my word. You'll try to behave in a way that I'll like, I suppose, and you'll do the work nicely, eh?—very well." Mrs. Sandringham had bowed her head in token of assent. "If I'm not pleased, of course I shall stop employing you: that's an understood thing, and for your own sake I daresay you'll do your best; but you must take care of the things, they are very expensive. I believe you're tired standing. Sit down on that chair there. I have several instructions to give you, of course. I wonder at myself for being so easily satisfied; I never employed anyone before without knowing all about them, but that's neither here nor there. As I said before, when I promised Peter I'll stick to it—and, howsomever—" Mrs. Carnegie was lapsing into the expressions habitual to her youth, perhaps, and she here pulled herself up. "I suppose Lady Eastlawn wouldn't approve that I should have anything to do with a person who had a mystery about them, and if I was in her house it is likely she would not hear of it, although, indeed, when I *was* there, she seldom interfered with me in anything; but Lord Cheneys doesn't mind anything so that his house is all right, and his servants the best-trained that can be had. It is, however, doubly imperative—" and she rang out the "r" in the word in a very effective way—"on me to be careful who I bring about the place; and I hope I shall not get cause to regret having trusted you—that is, I hope nothing will turn up or occur to show that you were unworthy of being trusted." She paused, expecting, perhaps, some protestation on the work-woman's part, but, as none came, she resumed briskly, for Mrs. Carnegie liked to hear herself talk, being a good deal more expert in that way than the so-much-quoted Lady Eastlawn herself. "It's not every one would do it, I know, especially when you are so secret; and I can't imagine, when it's only sorrow, that you should object to tell it. To be sure I remember about your feelings, but when the character is at stake, the feelings ought'nt to be so much minded. It's great nonsense, I must say, and makes one feel uncomfortable. A person in my position has so much depending on me. There's his lordship said to me, 'Now, Mrs. Carnegie, I know from Lady Eastlawn what you are, and I make you absolute

mistress in this place'—his very words—'and all I'll require is, let me have a nice house, good dinners, and good servants; and above all things, no *esclandres*.'

Brave Mrs. Carnegie! she had actually dashed at a French expression. It may be well assumed that Lord Cheney never spoke the word to her, but she had heard it somehow, as well as one or two more, and having industriously hunted out the meaning of them, she hoarded them for occasions like the present, as an artisan's wife treasures up her best dress for Sunday wear. Unfortunately, however, the pronunciation was not exactly Parisian, and it caused a faint smile to curve her listener's delicate lips, which, however, was instantly suppressed, and before it was noticed, so that she was left to believe that she had made a decided *coup*, and deeply impressed this impenetrable person—who, somehow, without any exertion on her part, had inspired the housekeeper with a sense of her own inferiority all through—which did not incite her to amiability—with the notion that she was a very erudite person.

"And so," said Mrs. Carnegie, in great good-humour, now, "I am all the more bound to be careful who I employ, and, to be sure, it's none but people of good lives I allow to enter these doors," waving her hand towards the door of her own room, by way of example, "and to, in fact, maintain the respectability of his lordship's residence. And now, please, I should like to know what sort of work—of needle-work—you have been doing?" giving her keys, which she had kept shaking unpleasantly, a last jerk, and thrusting them into her pocket, and drawing near the table—she pulled the chair forward after herself by curling her foot round the leg of it, with a business-like air.

And Mrs. Sandringham told her, and then the bell was rung, and a smart housemaid—Mrs. Carnegie's "right hand," as she said—appeared, and the tremendous bunch of keys was pulled out of the capacious pocket once more, and sundry presses, in a little room next that of the housekeeper's, were opened, packed close with strata of snowy linen, and satiny damask, and exquisitely fine cambric; and immaculate masses of the same taken therefrom, and selections made, and charges given, and payment arranged, and a hundred unnecessary things said; and what between one thing and another, it was more than an hour after she had entered Lord Cheney's house that Mrs. Sandringham sallied forth therefrom, accompanied, as before, by her drummer-boy. And it may be here remarked that Mrs. Carnegie knew perfectly well her brother's opinion, although he had not met the woman then; but he had learned something of her from Ralph, being too emphatic to be mistaken that she might safely employ without danger of disrespectability this "shabby-genteel person," as she spoke of her to

Susan, the housemaid, with such small jobs as she cared to give out in that way; but she had considered it her duty to ask those questions, and had persisted in them through curiosity, and perhaps a certain little feeling of spite. But when she was gone, she expressed her conviction to Susan, "that the poor thing wasn't bad, and that she might do the little she had given her nicely; and if she does," said Mrs. Carnegie, in a compunctious gush, "I shan't object to recommending her to Lady Eastlawn, for I am sure she can embroider well. Didn't you notice her hands, so nice and white? and I declare actually filbert nails, like a lady—however she came by them!—not but that, I daresay, she was respectable once—she has the look of it; but, of course, she wasn't anything grand—they never come so low as that, except in the novels; but I do think—don't you?—she's just the thing for it—I mean to be a lady's maid. And Lady Eastlawn is in want of one just now, and she seems to have good taste." Mrs. Carnegie, when she laid aside her best manners, was a little apt to be confusing now and then.

"Who?—Lady Eastlawn?" said the brisk, pretty-faced Susan. "Oh! *her*; but I don't think she'd take it—no, I don't," she added, more decisively. "It's nothing she said or did, but there's something about her. I can't fancy her watching Lady Eastlawn's wrinkled, painted old phiz. Oh! you needn't flare up—you know it's between ourselves, and you're not half as fond of her as you let on. Besides, you know she paints, and the enamel cracks with the wrinkles as fast as Madame Rachel sticks it on. But I can't fancy that—what'll I call her, woman or lady?—person, I'll say, though that's a nasty word—she's more like a lady—watching the cranky old lady, when she'd come home from some ball or other, as if her very life depended on the next word she'd speak, and she half dead with sleep at the same time. Well, it's not a pleasant life, a lady's maid's. I'd rather be what I am; and, if I were her, I'd stop at the plain sewing, if I could only have my bread-and-butter by it. Not but that I know they're pleasant enough sometimes, and going about to country houses, and meeting those gentlemanly valets is rare fun; and then the foreign parts! If I could only be with a young lady! But I wouldn't go lady's maid to Lady Eastlawn, if she were to buy a new dress every day, and give it to me after wearing it once. The furious look she shot at you once!—no, it wasn't you, I believe," said Susan, who had lived with Mrs. Carnegie at Lady Eastlawn's for a short time, and knew the housekeeper's weakness; "it was James, the footman—would frighten me out of my seven senses; and I did certainly hear her curse once. Oh! it was a frightful thing, and made me shake all over; and to see the nice, sweet look she has in company—it beats!"

"Well, all I have to say is," rejoined Mrs. Carnegie, emphatic-

ally, "of course you may say what you like—no one minds you; and as to the cursing, I don't believe a word of it. If she is a little angry now and then, isn't she a lady? and hasn't a lady the right to be angry? But all I have to say is, if that person—I think 'person' a very proper way to speak of her—was to refuse to be Lady Eastlawn's maid, she would deserve to—*starve!*" and Mrs. Carnegie brought her plump though not red hand somewhat heavily down on the table, as a man would do to emphasise his words.

"Oh, law!" exclaimed Susan, with a jump. "Well, try her—try her!" she said, laughingly, as she was about to leave the room. "I bet sixpence she won't have it," and then she skipped out, and shut the door without banging it, for Mrs. Carnegie had delicate nerves, spite of her robust colour.

"Yes, I will," the housekeeper said, aloud; then added to herself, "yes, I will; the very next day she comes here, I'll propose it, for I do think she would suit Lady Eastlawn."

But after that she changed her mind, and resolved that she would not speak of it until she had first spoken of it to Lady Eastlawn, who might not be willing to take a maid without a first-class recommendation; and, also, it would be well to see how Mrs. Sandringham would go on, and would she do the work nicely. So that, all things considered, she deemed it better to leave matters as they were for the present; and if Lady Eastlawn got another maid in the meantime, that would not so much matter, as there was a strong likelihood that this person would work nicely, and Mrs. Carnegie herself might find her useful in divers ways. And then she settled that she would not speak to Lady Eastlawn just yet. After some time, and if the latter were still without a maid, which was by no means likely, and if Mrs. Sandringham proved fitting for the post, she might recommend her to her former mistress; and when the housekeeper arrived at this conclusion, it was pretty clear that she would be rather inclined to keep Mrs. Sandringham's neat, expert fingers—she knew they would prove to be so—for her own service, and perhaps take her into the house in the end, to fill some non-descript post. In such a house as that of Lord Cheneys', it would be easy to find employment for a willing, handy person, and especially if—as it was rumoured by Lady Eastlawn's retainers—his lordship would bring his daughter to reside there.

In the meantime, as they wended their way through the fashionable West End quarter, Ralph was detailing to his mother how he had passed the hour during which he waited for her in the hall, in company with the gigantic footman.

"They were very civil after that," Ralph said; "and for want of something better to do, I suppose, they asked me a lot of questions, and we had no end of talk; and if I didn't make them laugh,

too; not that I thought I said anything funny, but they were ready to laugh at anything, sober as the fellow looked when we knocked; do you remember, mother? But I think their master is not so jolly, though. It seems he's a regular martinet. They didn't say that, but it's what the subs. call one of the colonels who is very strict. And he's in the army, too, you know. He is a fine-looking fellow—tall and straight as a poplar; but he is awfully stern-like. You'd think he couldn't smile if his life depended on it; and still he did smile when he ——"

"Did you see Lord Cheneys?" asked his mother.

"I believe I didn't tell you that he came through the hall whilst I was there—he and Lady Eastlawn, and another person. They told me *his* name, too, but I forget it. They got out of a great carriage and went through into the house, and a few minutes after Lady Eastlawn and the other gentleman came out and went away in the carriage. She's a great tall old lady, with a queer, white face and big eyes, and such a walk! She didn't look at me at all when Lord Cheneys was speaking to me."

"And did he speak to you? Oh, Ralph, how was that?" she asked pleasantly, seeing that he was proud of the honour.

"Yes," said he, gulping down an exultant exclamation. "He'd never pass a soldier, John told me (that's one of the footmen, you know); he told me so afterwards. His lordship asked the other fellow something, and then he came over straight to me, leaving the lady and gentleman to find their way as best they could, and he said, 'Well, my man, and what company are you in?' and when I told him, he said, 'Very good;' and asked me wouldn't I do my duty; and said I would be a brave soldier; and smiled so nicely; and I thinking he couldn't smile at all! But, mother, it was the way he said the things, not the things themselves that made it so pleasant. I'd do anything for that man. I wish I were serving under him! What a grand commander he would be! And he was such a great soldier himself. They say there's not a greater in the British army, and the Government don't know what to do with him, and they'll soon make him Prime Minister.—I beg your pardon, sir."

Here, Ralph, in his enthusiasm, had stumbled against a testy old gentleman, and evoked rather a strong exclamation from the same; but at the prompt apology he grunted out something expressive of forgiveness, and trudged along, after giving him a stare of half sulky approval.

"A queer old fellow that," said Ralph, looking after him, "and, really, he is turning down into the square where Lord Cheneys lives. I wonder if he is going to see him? It's well to be him, if so. There is not such a man in England or in Europe, I'd answer. Think, mother, of his stopping to talk to such as me! And thev

say—one of his own men told John, the footman—that he thinks more of one private soldier than of all the nobles of England. He loves the profession so much. He was always in it, and he did wonderful things out there in India, and had all the men ready to jump into a loaded cannon's mouth for his sake. But he was strict, too—awfully strict. He wouldn't pass over a military offence for any one—even for the Queen herself. That's the right way to make good soldiers."

"Is Lady Eastlawn related to him?" asked his mother, as Ralph paused here for breath.

"No, but her son is—she is ever so old and has a married son and grand-children—and her son served with him in India, and they are friends, and he did him, the son, some great service out there; and now he is going to get him some appointment; he has such influence, John says." John heard it from Lady Eastlawn's own maid, who was dismissed yesterday, for talking of her mistress's concerns. You see I heard everything. She's a very cranky old lady, it seems; but she is very fond of Lord Cheneys, and he thinks a great deal of her; and, you know, Stokes told us that she had the management of everything, as he had no wife or that, and he is living there now. I wish you saw him, mother."

"Why, Ralph, you are quite bewitched about this great man! You'll be twice as fond of your profession now that he belongs to it. I shall be quite jealous of him if you go praising him much more;" and she smiled happily, cheered at having work to do for herself, and at his enjoying this simple incident so highly.

And now they were getting into a bustling part of the City, and they could not talk with ease; but when they had reached the lodging, and Ralph was about to bid her good-bye, she said—

"Tell Sergeant Stokes that his sister has given me work, and that I am very thankful to him; and that I hope he'll come and see me soon, in order that I may be able to tell him how much he has relieved me, and how much I thank him. Not that I think he'd come for that, but I'll be glad to see him any time he chooses to come, for he's a good, honest, kind-hearted man, Ralph. Thank God you have such a friend! It makes my mind easy to know that he will be near you."

"But was his sister kind, mother?" asked Ralph.

"She—was—kind. She gave me work, and she will pay me well, and what more ought I to expect? She will not, perhaps, give me as much as she would give to others; but that is natural, at least, it is the way of the world. The poorer you are, the harder will be the terms dealt out to you. A poor dressmaker will receive about one-tenth the pay of a fashionable one, and yet may do the things equally well."

"But it's not fair!" exclaimed Ralph, indignantly. "Why shouldn't she pay you the same if you do the things well, as she would to another; if it's because you're poor——"

"That partly—and another reason, she does not know anything about me, and I was not prepared to tell her; and she is quite right, you must not find fault with her for that. She is in charge of this nobleman's great house, and must be particular, and, indeed, considering all things, she has behaved very well. I have reason to be very grateful to her."

"I wish you could meet Lord Cheneys himself, mother, for he'd see that you are a lady, and he'd tell her to treat you well."

"I should be very sorry to meet him, Ralph, and I don't think it's at all likely. Any time that I'll go there, I shall only pass through the hall, and on to the housekeeper's room, and if I thought there was any chance of meeting him, or Lady Eastlawn, or anybody of that kind, I should take care to avoid them. You ought to know, dear, that there's nothing I dislike more than exciting the interest or curiosity of people."

"But he wouldn't be impertinently curious, like others. He's a gentleman. However, you wouldn't wish it, mother, and then, of course, I shan't wish it either. It's well to have got the work, and I hope you'll be cheery now; and don't work too hard, and don't let yourself feel lonely; I'll come to-morrow, of course, as usual. Who knows, mother, but that our prospects are going to brighten now. Since you got the work in that house, and since Lord Cheneys spoke so nicely, I feel that everything will go well with us. You know it's very different from a shop, and you're sure to please her, and she'll pay you well, then, and I think to have anything to do with such a man as Lord Cheneys ought to bring a blessing upon us."

CHAPTER XXI.

SUCH A MEETING.

"Such a man as Lord Cheneys!" When she was alone she sat down, and thought over the day's proceedings. She was well pleased. Overbearing and curious as had been Mrs. Carnegie, she was less overbearing and less curious than nineteen out of every twenty women of her class would be, and under that unamiable covering this finely-constituted mind could detect a vein of good-nature, which assimilated her pleasantly to the warm-hearted Stokes, and promised better things for the future than the prying glances and patronising airs which had inaugurated Mrs. Sandringham's first meeting with Lord Cheneys' housekeeper. And as to him, who was he? She allowed herself to think gratefully of this gentleman,

who had spoken kindly to her poor son. She knew the gracious deed had sprung from habit; he could never pass a soldier, his servant had told Ralph, and seeing the boy soldier waiting in his hall, he stopped to speak to him, as was his wont. If it was any other boy but hers, he would have done the same thing; but still there was a motherly desire at the bottom of her heart to believe that he was struck with Ralph, that he was pleased with his manly bearing, and bright eyes, and open, honest face; and that although he might have stopped and spoken to any one else who might be there in that livery, his voice was more genial, and his smile more kind, because of those boyish attractions. And then she ridiculed herself at being fooled by those flattering fancies. "We always think that which is our own, the best, and brightest, and noblest; and there have I been thinking that Ralph is a sort of young demigod, and that this Lord Cheney discovered his extraordinary merit, which all the rest of the world was blind to, and was quite taken with him; and if I had allowed myself to go much farther, I should have been fancying how he would make him an officer, and give him some great post and enable him to distinguish himself, and become another hero before he was twenty. Oh! we are so foolish where our affections are concerned! Of course he would have spoken to anyone else as well; and would have said the very same things to him, perhaps: 'in what company was he, and wouldn't he do his duty,' and then have nodded kindly, and passed on just in the very same way. And that other, no doubt, would have valued the gracious notice as much as my poor Ralph values it; and would have boasted years after of that which the great man forgot the next moment. Oh, dear! what power there is in a little word or a smile! If the great ones of this world knew of it, would they deign more of their sunshine to their inferior brethren? I remember what *he* used to say, 'Be strict, if necessary; but be gracious when you can.' It would seem that this nobleman was acting upon that principle. He may—who knows?—he may have heard it from his own lips. He was one whose words would have weight. And this—Lord Cheney was in India; he saw him, knew him, perhaps; heard him speak later than I—since that time. Oh! I would give worlds—what folly!—and yet to have seen him once only—to know how he bore it—how he bore it! I dared never ask was he living or dead; and of whom should I ask it? I could not ask it now. To hear that he was dead would kill me, I do believe; and yet, why should I wish him to live? He is as dead to me as if he were already in the grave. He ought to be nothing to me. He never thinks of me now as his—own. He never recalls the time when——. Gracious Heaven! why should I recal it? I, who have so good cause to forget it for ever; but I

cannot ! I cannot ! Strive as I may, it will come back. Is he alive ? God knows ! What would I not give to know it, and to know he bore my—— ? Ah ! it was very bitter ; it is still very bitter ! If I could only have died then, and before that dreadful time, how he would grieve for me—how he would think of me—very differently from now !” She loosened the strings of her bonnet and took it off, and laid it on the table, then sat down and clasped her hands on her lap, allowing her eyes to rest dreamily on the floor. “ When I think of it all—all,” she murmured, in a low, strange tone, that had a wild wail through it, “ I wonder I did not go mad—not for myself, not for the degradation, the misery, the abhorrence—but for him, for him !—knowing what he felt, feeling what he suffered ! It was so close—our union—so intimate, so inexpressibly sweet ! It was too sweet, too delicious to last ; and he lived in it, he exulted in it, and what he must have suffered then ! I could bear all !—I would have borne all, if only he might be spared that ! Alas ! what would I not do for him !” After a few minutes, during which her hands were clasped tightly over her eyes, and when she removed them her eyes were bright and tearless, and her face deadly pale, she murmured again, “ What would not I do for him, my love, my love ! I know it’s wrong. I ought not to speak of him, or think of him thus now. He is lost to me, but it would be easier for me to part from my own soul than to tear his image out of it. I did what I could ; God knows I did what I could ; but I am only a poor, loving, foolish woman after all, and I thinking myself so strong and proud ! How I forget Ralph—everything—when I think of him ! And what brought thought of him now ? Ah, this great man, Lord Cheneys. He was so kind to my poor boy ; just like what *he* would do. He, too, would never pass a soldier. He, too, had a kind word for the lowliest. Oh ! how every incident comes back, and every saying of his as bright as if I had heard it yesterday !” And then she checked herself, finding that she was indulging in those thoughts, and she stood up and put by her things in a strangely calm way, and moved about, putting the place into order to occupy her mind. But, alas ! no feminine taste could impart beauty to things which had no beauty in themselves, or lend grace to a spot where poverty and hideous plainness were rampant ; and with a quiet smile, as if amused at her own simplicity in attempting to improve matters, she sat down, and once more commenced her work.

Sergeant Stokes’ little scheme was a success. The work was well done, was paid for, and she received more. Mrs. Carnegie became agreeable, and laid aside all her curiosity. There was no haggling about price, no delay of payment. She went there about twice a week, sometimes only once, when she would have more work, and received the money, and with it more work ; and this,

with what she still took from the shop, where Mrs. Caper was known, helped her wonderfully. There was no more fasting on one meal. She was able to be comfortable now, and as Christmas came on to have a snug fire in her room, and some meat occasionally for dinner. And this rejoiced honest Mrs. Caper, who, in fact, had brought it about; for if she had not spoken to Ralph, he would never have suspected the extreme poverty of his mother's state. Let a boy be never so affectionate, he cannot help his nature, and boyhood is a thoughtless period, and in that case Sergeant Stokes' good offices would not have been enlisted.

He visited Mrs. Sandringham, in company with Ralph, once after she went to his sister first, and then he told the boy he would not go any more, as, with rare delicacy, he said *he* was no fit acquaintance for *her*; and that, whatever she might say, or however friendly she might feel towards him, it would still be pleasanter for such as her to be left alone.

"You see, I am a rough fellow, my boy," he said, "and she's a lady, and it makes all the difference in life; but any time she wants me, only say the word, and I'll do what I can to help her. I am glad Jane was agreeable,—I thought she'd be,—and she'll come to be more so when they know each other better."

On that occasion he had said to Ralph's mother, after she had thanked him heartily for his endeavours on her behalf, and he had received the thanks in a confused, deprecating sort of way—

"Jane is blunt, ma'am, but I think you'll find her honest and kind, and I hope she'll be able to serve you. I suppose she told you she had been in Lady Eastlawn's service. She was ten years with her, and, by all accounts, she had a hard card to play. But the lady stood her friend, and got her this place, which is a great deal better than what she had with herself, and she is very comfortable now. *Well* I remember the time when she went a servant-maid first, and she was a pretty-faced girl enough. And then James Carnegie—he was a footman—married her, and he had something saved, and they set up a public-house. But he took to drinking, and killed himself at it, and she went a servant again; and then Lady Eastlawn took a liking to her, and made her her housekeeper."

"She seems to be greatly attached to her," said Mrs. Sandringham, thinking of the interview in which that name had been so often quoted.

"She is, ma'am," said the sergeant, scratching his head in a puzzled way: "but it's not all affection, to my thinking. She's proud of being with her—for, you see, Lady Eastlawn is very particular. But she liked Jane uncommon well. It's a wonder she parted with her. She must be very fond of this gentleman, Lord

Cheneys. They say he's a good friend to her son, Lord Eastlawn. He was in India, too. He's married, and they say he doesn't know how to take care of himself; but there's no believing stories. Anyhow, he's poor for a lord, you know, ma'am, and he has a wife—another Lady Eastlawn, and a lot of children, and they expect that the old Lady Eastlawn—"the dowager" they call her—will do something for them, for she is very rich (she has a great property in her own right), and very saving, too. It's Jane could tell you that, I believe. But she lives well, and sees a deal of company, and her house is full of tip-top people in the season, when she has her 'receptions,' or whatever they call them. It's a queer life them quality lead, ma'am! It's like enough they get tired of it sometimes. To my mind it must be awful wearisome, keeping at it always; but that old lady doesn't ever think of stopping; she beats out the young people in love of it. She was a great beauty in her time; I suppose she finds it hard to give it up now, and she is near sixty, they say—though you'd never think that, to look at her—and hale and hearty as ever."

And then Mrs. Sandringham thought of Ralph's description, "A great, tall old lady, with a queer, white face, and big eyes!" What a lesson it must be to see such a one, not merely moving through, but taking delight in a scene of gaiety!

"It's a strange life, as you say, sergeant; and, I dare say, not the happiest either; at least, I think I should like to do a little work now and then."

And when Sergeant Stokes left her that day he carried away the impression from her manner, that though in respectable circumstances, she must not have been quite the great lady he had fancied at first. On the two occasions she had certainly taken pains to disabuse him of the idea. But it did not abate his respect in the least. Sergeant Stokes was not of that calibre.

And so the time went on, and matters improved with her, and she was beginning to be a little comfortable when Christmas came round. She had been several times to the square, and Mrs. Carnegie was quite gracious with her now. The work was more than satisfactory; the work woman punctual and submissive; and they got on very well in their transactions together. Mrs. Carnegie had altogether given up the idea of proposing her to fill the dismissed Abigail's place in Lady Eastlawn's *ménage*, and that was now filled by another, but she spoke of her more than once to her ladyship as a very tasteful and cleanly needle-worker, and received some little jobs for her too, with which Lady Eastlawn was so well pleased that she gave her more, and desired "Jane" to tell the woman to call at her own place sometimes. And she did so, and met the formidable Lady Eastlawn, but was quite as well able to do for her as

she had been for Mrs. Carnegie; not that she was so patronising or curious as the pompous housekeeper; she scarcely asked any questions at all, and treated her in a careless, kind way, that had no contempt, and at the same time no intention of pleasing in it, as if she scarcely took the trouble of thinking to what class the person to whom she was speaking might belong; but at the same time she was outspoken and exacting, spite of the kindness, and seemed to think that no person's will or convenience should be considered but her own; and Mrs. Sandringham, without quarrelling with her, brought her to understand that she could not quite give up her whole time to her. Mrs. Carnegie had employed her first, and she was resolved to adhere to her, not that she said that to Lady Eastlawn. The latter had discovered that she could embroider and do other little matters, and was inclined to take her into the house with her, but she would not consent to that. However, Lady Eastlawn continued to employ her, for she had taken quite a liking to the "quiet body," as she spoke of her to Mrs. Carnegie. "She has not too much talk, and she is not coarse, and she works so nicely. Where can you have made her out, Jane?" she said.

"It was my brother spoke of her, my lady," Mrs. Carnegie replied; "her son is a soldier, and she was in a very bad way, and the son spoke of her to Peter, and good-natured Peter readily came to me. I didn't like to have anything to do with her at first, she was so silent about her own affairs, and, in fact, refused to tell me anything. I thought it wouldn't be respectable, but as I had promised Peter, and he was sure about her, I said I would give her something at least, if only to keep my word. And then she behaved so well, I kept giving her more. I hope, my lady, she pleases you?"

"Yes, very well, and I am glad you spoke of her to me, Jane. She is a nice useful body, and the chief thing I like about her is, she is so quiet. There is repose in her, although her face looks sometimes as if it were only a mask. She is not a common woman, it was only the other day I noticed that, and really I have taken quite an interest in her since. And so she has a son a soldier? She looks very young for that; I hope she is——"

"But Peter says he is only a boy, my lady, and I think she is all right," said Mrs. Carnegie, hastily, as Lady Eastlawn paused here. It would not be pleasant if she took it into her head to forbid the woman admittance. She acted in many things as if she were really mistress of Lord Cheneys' house, having an inclination to that sort of supremacy; but she had no intention of exciting her self-chosen authority in this case. Lady Eastlawn's views were not so strict as the housekeeper supposed them. "She looks like

an honest woman, my lady, and has no queer ways about her. To be sure she is a little secret, but she says she suffered a great deal, and doesn't like to speak of it; and Peter thinks very highly of her."

"Ah! and so she has a little story—a romance, no doubt. Rather good-looking. Looks above her circumstances; eh, Carnegie?"

"Yes, my lady, but not too proud for them, to my thinking. She'll make the most of them. She told me she was better off, but that's all she'd say; and when I seemed to doubt her she shot me such a look that made me quite afraid of her. But she's a nice gentle body for all that, and I never met anybody to be so punctual or to do the things so nicely."

"She does certainly work very well, and neatly," said Lady Eastlawn, meditatively. "She'd do capitally for a maid. I wonder she never thought of becoming one."

"She wouldn't, my lady—I know it for certain," said the housekeeper, decisively. "She has a deal of pride, quiet as she is; and wouldn't be bidden by any one. But I think your ladyship will find her useful and willing; and as I can't always have work for her, I'd be glad she'd have your ladyship to back her. Poor thing! it would be a pity she was to be in the way she was before."

It may be seen by this that Mrs. Carnegie had softened considerably since that first meeting, and also that she was on very good terms with her former mistress, and courageous enough to plead the cause of another with her.

"Well, we'll see; and now you may go, Jane." It was in Lady Eastlawn's own dressing-room, in Portman-square, to which Mrs. Carnegie had access; and the stately dowager was wont to receive her there, to hear reports, and have a little "confab," as she pleasantly said when in good-humour with all the world, and herself and Mrs. Carnegie in particular. "Ring the bell for Lizette—but, stay; a thought has just struck me. I shall be leaving town immediately, for some time. I shouldn't have stopped so long—it's dreary, to be sure—but to see about that house; and it strikes me that if Lord Cheneys decides to have that suite prepared for a lady"—(she did not deem it necessary to say *what* lady, but Mrs. Carnegie was not one to deny herself the pleasure of guessing in such a matter; and whilst listening with an attentively demure face, she was mentally arriving at the conclusion as to whom her former mistress was speaking of)—"you might consult that Mrs.—what's this you call her?"

"Sandringham, my lady, perhaps," suggested the housekeeper.

"Yes, Sandringham—as to the colours, and what's most likely

to please a young girl, for I can see that the woman has excellent taste—a great deal better than your's, Jane. You know you never had an idea of taste, and it's not right to leave such things to the upholsterer; and as for myself, I can't think of that kind of thing now: I have a great many other things to think of. Besides, I don't know whether he'll get it done or not, and it might be only a waste of thinking, after all, to bother my mind about it. I took some trouble about that house, as you have seen, Jane, but I don't look on it as thrown away. My son has a great regard for Lord Cheneys, and so have I, for he made the time I spent with my husband in India very pleasant. That's eight years ago now. Then, he's my cousin, and I want him to take his proper place here. He was only thrown away out there in India, and it was time for him to think of his health. By the bye, I wish you would call at Edmundson's"—and here followed some instructions unnecessary to detail the mention of, which will show that Lady Eastlawn had no objection to make use of other people's servants, and spare her own, when an opportunity offered.

She left town during the holidays, and Mrs. Carnegie did certainly feel a relief when the imperious dowager was no longer to be seen sailing through the galleries of the stately mansion in Portman-square. And another fortnight passed, and there was nothing said about the suite; but at last one day Lord Cheneys sent for his housekeeper to his study, and directed her to have it done up at once in the best possible style, suggesting that she should write to Lady Eastlawn for instructions. Then she told him of what Lady Eastlawn had said, that she approved of the taste and judgment of a certain woman she had been employing for some time past in needlework, and had directed her to depend on this person's suggestions as being likely to prove quite as good as she could make herself, to which, of course, he assented readily. He did not want to be too *exigeant*. His good old cousin, as he said to himself, had quite gone out of her way to oblige him, and she had foreseen and provided for this matter, so he would leave it to be done as she had arranged.

The next day that Mrs. Sandringham came, the housekeeper took her to the suite of rooms in question. They were bare and unfurnished still, his lordship, as Mrs. Carnegie explained, not having made up his mind what he would do with them, and was leaving them so until that mental process should have taken place; but they were spacious rooms, and lighted by several large windows. Mrs. Carnegie had provided that seats should not be wanting, and she immediately lapsed into a comfortable easy chair near one of the windows, for, as she said, it was easier to talk sitting than standing. "One may as well be comfortable when one can. How you walk

that distance, Mrs. Sandringham, is a wonder to me. I know where Frimp-street is. John, the footman, has a cousin who keeps a public-house at the corner of it and Haylit-street, and he told me the other day how many streets it is from Cheapside. I remember the time when I could do it easy, but I have got a little into flesh lately, and I can hardly walk upstairs without puffing. You must be tired; sit down. We have plenty of time. You see what it is to have good taste. Lady Eastlawn told me to consult you about these rooms, as she would not be here herself. Two heads are better than one."

"Yes, but, you know, I am not accustomed to the fashionable houses of London, and have no idea as to the style in which they are done, except this one."

"Oh, that's of no consequence. The upholsterers will know all about that. It's only the colours, and which room would be best for the bed-room, and which for the boudoir, and what sort of things—they'll send us a catalogue—would be nicest for a young lady. It's a young lady; my lord was not going to have her here, but Lady Eastlawn, I think, is persuading him to. He may change his mind again, but that is neither here nor there. We are to get the rooms done now. When we have settled about the things we are to submit the plan to his lordship's approval. Of course I know he'll leave it as we decide. His heart is not in the business, if he has such a thing as a heart."

"I thought you told me that he was a kind master."

"The best in the world. I'd never choose to leave him of my own accord; and all the rest of the people say the same thing. Oh, it's not that but he's very strict, they say, though he does not seem so here; perhaps if he got reason he would, but somehow they are all very good. I believe they are afraid of him in their hearts, and try to please him as well as they can. Though it's little he says, there's a look about his face which would make you think of him. I mean when he wouldn't be present, and not like to vex him either. But they do say that he was awfully strict out there in India, and the soldiers were very much afraid of him. But he was as hard on the officers as the privates, and, strange enough, they all loved him. When I said that about his heart, I meant that he doesn't seem to care much about this business, you know, and would just like as well if we settled it all ourselves without bothering him."

Here Mrs. Carnegie paused, as if expecting to be questioned; but in this she was disappointed, for there was no one less disposed to gossip than her companion. She had no curiosity about Mrs. Carnegie's employer. She was prepared to do anything that might be required of her; very willing to oblige the housekeeper,

who had certainly been very good to her but she was supremely indifferent to all those matters which usually supply food for feminine curiosity, and as she had no remark to make about Lord Cheneys, she proposed that they should proceed to the business they had in hand.

Lady Eastlawn proved to be in the right as regarded the poor needlewoman's taste and judgment. Her suggestions were excellent, and Mrs. Carnegie was wise enough to allow herself to be guided by her in all the arrangements. As she had predicted, Lord Cheneys showed very little interest therein; contenting himself with hearing his housekeeper's report, and approving of Mrs. Sandringham's decisions. It was at this period that she met him for the first time. She had studiously avoided everyone, and was especially anxious to steer clear of such as him or Lady Eastlawn, for they belonged to that sphere—perhaps a trifle above it—in which she had moved once, and it would be peculiarly annoying to be the subject of well-bred curiosity. But fate had decreed that she should meet Lord Cheneys. It happened in this wise.

The largest of the idle rooms had been destined for a bedroom. It opened on the gallery. There were two other doors besides that one; one opening on a little room meant for a dressing-room, and which was being done up in a very elegant style; the other on a hexagon chamber, with a large bow-window looking upon a paved court below, to be the mythical lady's sitting-room, and would be a bijou of a boudoir when the ambitious upholsterer's views would have been carried out. Here she was seated, folding and arranging variously cut pieces of silk, of a white ground, strewn with green leaves, her beautiful hands busied with the rich texture, and her mind intent thereon; for she had succeeded in training it to banish all thoughts foreign to her work, and she worked better in consequence. You see she had a life of work before her, and she was resolved to apprentice herself to it. During those previous five years she had merely been coquetting with it. Now she would begin in earnest. It was dinner hour for the sons of work, and everybody had left, and she was alone in the hexagon chamber. Mrs. Carnegie had just left it, but she was dallying in the outside room when there came a man's step into it. The other heard a question asked in a voice that she knew belonged not to the upholsterer's men, or the helpers, or any one of low grade. It was a gentleman's voice, and she thought it must be the voice of Lord Cheneys. Then she said to herself that she hoped he would not come into the room where she was, for she shrank from meeting him; but she went on folding the flowered silk, quietly feeling that if he would, she must, of course, be satisfied with it, as well as with all the other great and little annoyances of her life. But presently after there had been

some few words between them, she heard Mrs. Carnegie say—"Only the poor sempstress there, my lord," and then the step came on towards the room in which she sat. She rose hastily, feeling a little trepidation at meeting this great lord, whose money she had been receiving for some time back, but whom she had carefully avoided meeting, and mentally vowing that she would not expose herself to such a chance again. It was very easy to do with such as Mrs. Carnegie, or Sergeant Stokes, or Mrs. Caper; she had no objection for *them* to see her poverty, or to pity her, but, in spite of all her trying, she could not conquer her dislike to such an encounter as that which was imminent, for she had a morbid prescience that her former position would be guessed, and shrank with over-sensitiveness from a well-bred stare or aristocratic curiosity. She stood up with a half-consciousness that it would not be meet for such a one as her to remain sitting in the lord's presence; but allowed her eyes to fall on the ground, and retaining a piece of silk between her slim white hands. Facing the door, standing in one of the half-circles of the window, with the light from the other falling full upon her, she was clearly visible to anyone coming from the bedroom. She had laid aside her bonnet, and wore a plain black cloth paletot, over her dark stuff dress, with the narrow rim of a white collar appearing above it; her gold-brown hair was smoothed over her forehead, and drawn neatly to the back, disclosing one-half of a delicate ear, her neck snowy-white as the collar, a faint flush of shrinking nervousness in her cheeks. She looked almost girlish, and unmistakeably beautiful.

Lord Cheneys—for it was he—advanced straight into the room. Then he stopped short. He had first glanced carelessly at the figure in the window, then his eyes returned to her face, looked more searchingly, and finally became fixed in a steady gaze. He was standing at a little distance from her, staring at her as you would stare at one you expected never more to see. He was a tall man, over forty; with a firmly-knit muscular frame, deep grey eyes, a face that might have been called handsome but for the intensely stern expression that forbade any so genial epithet being applied to it; a mouth of iron, shaded by a dark and plentiful moustache; hair, beard, and, moustache of a deep ungrizzled brown—not a sign of grey, and to be sure, he was too young for that, and whatever he had known of suffering had been too sternly fought against to permit its affecting his exterior; an erect soldierly part, that showed well at reviews, and in the front of battle; altogether a noble-looking and essentially military-looking man; but alas for the wretch who fell under his sense of justice! And yet it was not anything like mercilessness that was in his face, now. The sternness was softened into wonder, mellowed down into pure, and simple, and

unspeakable surprise. Perhaps never in his life was Lord Cheney so utterly taken aback as in this moment, standing face to face with the woman whom his housekeeper called "the poor sempstress," the woman who had fled from his side one dark night sixteen years ago!

She wondered what was the stop and the silence for, and, thinking to find him buried in thought, with eyes practically on the floor, but looking back mentally to some distant battle-field in which he had borne a distinguished part, she raised her own liquid, lustrous orbs, to see what manner of man this great hero, this great Lord Cheney was. A brief glance—he was more changed than she, but she was a woman, and with women the faculty of recognition is sharper than with men—and then the silk fell out of her hands, and she shrank back a step or two.

"Gracious heaven!" she gasped; "it is—it is Colonel Dormer!"

"Yes, madam!" said he, "it is Ralph Dormer!"

SCHLESWIG

SINCE our trip to Glücksburg,* good reader, nearly six weeks have elapsed, and during all that time you have not been asked to join in any of those pleasure parties we then proposed making; but the reason is very simple—we have not been for any. This is what has happened to prevent us putting our plans into execution. Awaiting Oscar on our return from Glücksburg was a letter from a brother officer, a Captain Ingen, informing him of the sudden illness and death of their adjutant, and advising his immediate return, that he might apply personally for the vacant post; which advice it was at once decided ought to be acted upon; so the next evening found Oscar in Copenhagen. An interval of uncertainty followed, then came the news of success. “But,” he wrote, “obtaining the adjutancy is not all pure pleasure. I find I must give up my remaining five weeks’ leave. For all that, however, the wedding need not be put off; I have been promised three days clear, if I can get through all the arrears of work, and put everything straight by the end of the month. This, you may be sure, I shall do, if I have to work day and night to accomplish it; so should my letters be few and short, Doris will know the reason. Three days does seem running it rather close, ’tis true, but as only one is required for the journey each way, that allows a whole day for the wedding; and as an hour is long enough to get married in, there must be ample time for the ceremony to be duly performed in twenty-four, so there can be no excuse for putting it off.” Frau von Vreese, however, appeared to think there were a great many excuses which would prove much more difficult to put off than the wedding, but Oscar found means to make them inefficient grounds, nevertheless, and, after a little further demur, Frau von Vreese acquiesced. From that day we women were very busy, nor did our labours cease till a few mornings ago, when we were grouped around the altar-railings of the little Danish church of the “Holy Ghost,” none but a family party and the clergyman, who, after blessing the marriage-ring, gave it to Oscar, with the words: “True as gold, and endless as this ring, be your love;” he, taking the same, slipped it on the slim fourth† finger of Doris’s dainty right hand. A short address followed, and then the clergyman, after warmly congratulating the happy pair, departed, that we might make our farewells alone. Nor did we linger long over leave-takings, but with a hearty “God

* Referring to a former article by the author.

† According to German counting, which reckons the thumb as the first finger.

bless you!" and "God speed" from each, they stepped into the carriage that was to take them to Sonderburg, from whence the next day they took the steamer to Korsör, and from there the train to Copenhagen.

Frau von Vreese feels the loss of Doris so much that she has asked me to stay with her a little longer, until she has got somewhat more accustomed to being without her, and I have gladly consented, if, in the least, I can help to fill up the void caused by Doris's departure.—Two days after the wedding I received the following note:—

"DEARLY-LOVED MISS,—My father having received a summons requesting his presence at the castle to-morrow, he is obliged to go to Schleswig. As he prefers riding to going by train, my mother and I intend accompanying him. If you would like to see the capital of the duchy, a corner of the carriage is at your service, and the pleasure of your company most heartily wished for by

"Your truly devoted

"MARIE V——."

"It is very kind of them, but, of course, I shall not accept," said I, handing the note to Frau von Vreese.

"Of course you will not refuse, you mean."

"But I put off my return to England on purpose to be with you, and now that the days of my stay are numbered, I should not like to leave."

"Now, my dear, just listen to me. You know that Sophus rejoins his ship the day after to-morrow, and that my husband is just now very deeply engaged in some law business; but so great was our wish you should see Schleswig, that I had determined upon taking you there myself one day next week. So you see this invitation comes most opportunely, for Fräulein V—— can show you everything much better than I should have been able to do. And, again, you will now see much that you would else have missed, as we should have gone by train, and the line of rail is very uninteresting, whilst the carriage road is just the reverse. Besides, there is another reason why I would not have you refuse their offer on any account: you know the V——'s are fiery Augustenburgers, and might think you did not like to accept because we did not like your associating with any one who was not of our party."

"But when I first came I went there often enough, and if I have not done so lately it is only because we have been so busy."

"Very well, then; show that that really was the reason by going to-morrow. You had better walk over and tell them you will be very happy to do so."

As Frau von Vreese says, the V——'s are indeed fiery Augustenburgers. Pastor V——, who had made himself very conspicuous in the

ineffectual rising of '48, was obliged to flee the country, nor dared return until last year, when he was recalled, and offered his former living. Fifteen years of exile had in no wise damped his political ardour, or weakened his love for his native land; so, though he had gained the love and esteem of his parishioners at Essen, where he had passed the long years of his banishment, he felt still more drawn towards his own people and the place of his former labours. Yet he remembered the frequent changes between '48 and '51, and being now well stricken in years he felt that, should affairs again take a different turn, he could not endure the hardships of another flight; so he made his acceptance to depend upon his being chosen in such a manner by the congregation, that if the Probstir or Arch-deaconery, which was offered with the living, were taken from him, he could not be ejected from the pastorate. This was done; then he, his wife and daughter, returned to the old vicarage. And the congregation of the "Johanni Kirche," which, like those of the other Flensburg, and, in fact, like all Schleswig churches of late years was not, did not exist, awoke to life once more, and flocked for the most part back. But Probst V——, who is not one ever to be satisfied with any half measures, continued week by week with loving words and strong remonstrances to invite, entreat, and command all to turn their feet into the long untrodden path, until the little church was filled once more to overflowing; and if all of those who had forsaken the well-known way did not return, others, who had shunned church-going as hypocrisy, went to listen to a man who was not afraid to speak the truth, even concerning the things of this life, "though it were to his own hurt." For as time passed on and "might" made "right," not unfrequently from the altar of his church went up the cry of his heart, "How long, O Lord, how long?" and the prayer for patience to bear the unjust yoke.

His daughter, no longer young, possesses a charm which outweighs youth and beauty in the elegance and refinement of body and mind. I had previously made her acquaintance at Hanover, and was pleased to be able to renew it once more when it was again offered me in so unexpected a manner.

At nine o'clock a carriage stops at the door of a house just opposite the Danish Church; one of the vacant seats is taken, and on it rattles over the rough Flensburg road, which can only be exceeded in badness by the Flensburg pavement. To right and left stand houses, dating mostly from sixteen hundred and something, as the large figures on their front testify, side by side with houses so new that the glowing red of the bricks has not had time to tone down, and the paint seems hardly to have dried yet; the former with queer high-pointed gables and small-paned windows, equal with the walls, these showing, in many instances, a decided leaning to one

neighbour, instead of holding an honest upright position between both. The more pretending modern buildings boast of three or four stories, and generally a goodly show of plate glass for the shop-fronts. The size of these fine houses might inspire you with an erroneous opinion as to the grandeur of the Flensburg tradespeople; but these large buildings are in most cases not the exclusive dwellings of their owners. The fact is, the Flensburg tradesman likes to have a large expanse of window for the display of his wares, and one grand saloon, as stiff and dreary as may be, to receive visitors in. For the rest, he is content with a very small amount of room and light in his daily life, and to keep himself very much in the background, whilst one or more families have possession of the *premier étage* and each succeeding flat.

This low, grey building is the guildhall and prison. Opposite it is the shop of Senator C——, the greatest of Flensburg's merchants. Though the owner of quite a small fleet of merchantmen, and though he does a large wholesale business, Senator C—— is not above a shop, or of himself selling a yard of ribbon or a pennyworth of buttons. When King William of Prussia visited Flensburg eighteen months ago [written in '65], it was here he was received and lodged with princely hospitality. For then, and as long as the war lasted, the people of Schleswig-Holstein believed in the integrity of Prussia's word, and the kingly promise to maintain the rights of the Duke of Augustenburg.

We pass through the Holm, as this narrow part of the street is called, and are in the irregular square of the Südermarkt, three sides of which are formed by some of the oldest houses in the town, nearly all built with what the Scotch call crow or corbie steps. Half way up the Hafer Strasse the carriage stops at the vicarage; only the Herr Probst and Fraulein V—— get in, for the Frau Probstir is not feeling equal to so long a drive, but she comes to the door to see us off and wish us all a pleasant day. The town ends at the top of the street with the Hafermarkt, and we come to the Süder Hohlweg (narrow pass or defile). You must not, from the name, be led to think the Hohlweg anything very grand or gloomy. There is no roaring cataract on the one side, or beetling crags, which look as if they would topple down and crush you, on the other; it is simply a decidedly narrow road, with high banks on either side, such as you may meet with in many a Devonshire lane; but, though a few wild-flowers bloom amongst the tall coarse grass, there is none of that luxuriant vegetation—above all, none of the lovely ferns which a Devonshire lane would surely abound in. As I have before said, the country of Schleswig-Holstein is nowhere grand; in parts it is flat and dreary in the extreme, with its immense level wastes of bog; but round about Flensburg and all along the

east coast it is for the most part lovely in the extreme,—a succession of gently undulating hills, well-wooded valleys, and pretty creeks, where the Baltic steals deeply into the mainland. In the words of a gentleman who has seen far more of the world than I have, and is therefore more competent to give an opinion, “I have travelled nearly all over Europe, but nowhere have I found more lovely bits of scenery than are to be obtained from different points near Flensburg.”

Those steps cut in the right bank lead to a house where I paid a visit some six months ago. The weather then was exceptionally severe, even for this cold climate, and formed at the time the general topic of conversation. Talking about it, the lady of the house said to me—

“Although the cold is much greater than it was last year, even then it was considered unusually severe; it does not strike me as being so, perhaps, because I saw then how dreadfully the poor soldiers suffered from it. The 6th February, last year, was the battle of Oeversee. In the afternoon we heard the firing of cannon,—Oeversee is, you know, only five miles distant; towards evening it ceased gradually, and before night stragglers of flying Danes came in sight, and then more and ever more, until the whole road was one continuous line of fugitives. Many of them could get no further than here, and our house and garden were soon crowded by poor creatures worn out by fatigue and hunger, and hardships of every kind; some of them so utterly exhausted that they could not even mount the steps, but sat down midway, and few of those ever rose up again. A thaw had just set in, and the dampness in the air seemed to penetrate with a more chilling cold into the very marrow of one's bones than even the biting frost had done. Through all this many of those poor men marched barefooted, some because they really had no shoes to wear, and others because they thought, poor souls, the swollen, aching feet were not so icily cold when pressing the soft snow as when encased in hard leather boots which bruised so cruelly, and appeared too heavy for the poor weary feet to carry. All those that thronged us had but the one cry: ‘Something to drink; a mouthful of something hot in the name of God!’ And in a trice every kettle and saucepan was on the fire, and coffee emptied pound upon pound into the boiling water; yet it all seemed a mere drop, powerless to alleviate the ocean of suffering by which we were surrounded. True, they were our enemies, but who, at such a moment, could stop to think whether such unfortunates were friends or foes? In them we no longer saw the despot Dane, but only poor fellow-human beings in such dire misery, that, forgetting the cause, we could only see the effect, and feel pity for the poor sufferers.”

About three miles further on our road we come to Bildschau, where a skirmish took place in the former war. Two miles beyond lies Oeversee. As far as numbers are concerned it can barely be called a battle that was fought there. Two Danish infantry regiments were overtaken by a far greater Austrian force (partly cavalry), and having besides sixteen cannon against the two field-pieces, which were all the Danes had with them. Nevertheless, Oeversee saw some of the sharpest fighting there was during the war, and it was not till great losses had been sustained on either side, especially by the Danes in officers, that the latter retreated before such fearful odds. No need to ask if this be the spot,—that it is so the white monument which crowns the little hill on our left makes sufficiently evident. We alight to have a look at it, and in two minutes stand on the top of the hillock beside the large white stone, planted round with four cannon, placed endwise. It bears a short inscription, to the effect that it was “raised by Austrians to their fallen brothers, who died victorious on the 6th February, 1864.” At a little distance stands the quaint old village church, which appears to have escaped unscathed, although there was fighting very near. The V——’s have a servant from these parts, and they have brought her that she may spend the day with her father and mother. We have already left her house a good way behind, but she asked to be allowed to come so far that she may point out to us the different places. But I am afraid her information is not always to be depended upon for correctness. For instance, close by the church, in a little field scarce an acre of ground, she tells us three Danish generals fell, whereas the colonels of the two regiments were the officers highest in rank present. In fact, how should she know? for she herself says before the fight took place they received orders to put up their shutters and not stir out of their house, unless they wished to be killed, until it was all over. “So,” she says, “you may be sure we remained quiet as mice, half frightened to death by the noise which surrounded us on every side. But even that was not half so dreadful as when, in the silence that followed, they began to bring in the wounded one by one, and our house was turned into a hospital for that night and many days after. Pray God, I may never see the like again!” Saying which she gets down from the box, and with a nod and a “*Na, atjus!*” by which she means adieu, retraces her steps.

Twelve more miles brings us to Idstedt, which we do not enter, but merely skirt, passing the Friedhof (churchyard, literally court of peace), where lie those men of war who fell on the 25th July, 1850. Here, as at Oeversee, fourteen years later, the same cause worked the same effect, but the order of things was reversed. In this case the Danes, under General Krogh, were 36,000 strong, while the Schleswig-Holsteiners, under General Willisen, only numbered

26,000. Kohlrausch, in his admirable "History of Germany," writes:—"Both sides fought with the utmost bravery from early morning until nearly noon with changing fortune; but the superiority of numbers gave the victory to the Danes." The losses at the battle of Idstedt might, on both sides, have been some 6,000, and here for the most part they lie buried. But all along our road from beyond Bildschan till some distance past Idstedt our way has been marked by graves scattered here and there along the roadside—sometimes a solitary one, sometimes groups of them—nearly all marked by a small black cross; and those of such who had fallen in the late war, generally ornamented with wreaths or ribbons of the national colours, the red and white of the staunch Lutheran and sturdy Dane mingling with the sombre black and yellow of the brave but bigoted Catholic Austrian. But a stormy winter's rain has made them all of one dingy nondescript colour.

Twenty-two English miles of, on the whole, capital road separate Flensburg from Schleswig. This the strong Holstein horses have accomplished in a little more than three hours, counting the stoppages by the way, which were rather frequent, if not lengthy. It is but half-past one as we alight at the hotel "Stadt Hamburg." Of course it is called "Stadt Hamburg." I verily believe there is not a town or village large enough to boast of an hotel in all Schleswig-Holstein where *the* hotel is not called "Stadt Hamburg." On my way here I was unexpectedly obliged to pass a night at Rendsburg. Not knowing anything about the place, I asked which was the best hotel, and was told, "'Stadt Hamburg,' decidedly." I come to Flensburg, and the principal German hotel is the "Stadt Hamburg;" the same here, and so I believe it is throughout the length and breadth of the duchy. But this one, though bearing the stereotyped name, is more generally known as the "Esselbachsche Hotel," Madame Esselbach being the name of the landlady, who is quite a celebrity in her way, more so even than the renowned Madame Rasch, who has the "Raschen Hotel," at Flensburg"—both widely known for being intensely Danish. Out the portly matron comes, and receives us with a grand, old-fashioned curtsey. At least, her health does not seem to have suffered from last year's troubles, which were only to be equalled by those of '48 and '50. What it must have cost her (not in a pecuniary point of view, for she, I believe, received adequate payment for all expenses incurred), but what, I say, must it not have cost her feelings to be obliged to fill her house from top to bottom with those hated Germans—to have them forced upon her in such numbers that every nook and corner, even her own particular room, had to be given up to the enemy! And then to have had to put up with the impertinence of "beardless boys," ay, and of bearded veterans, too, if one

may believe the tale universally current, that when General, or *der alte Papa Wrangel*, as the people delight to call him, saw her again in '64, he boldly kissed the buxom dame, which act of gallantry he immediately spoilt by saying, "Well, Madame Esselbach, neither of us have grown younger in the last fifteen years, I take it!"

On she ushers us through the billiard-room, in which more than one lank, long-legged, sallow-cheeked "beardless boy" are listlessly lolling over the green-baized table, cue in hand, up to the *premier étage*. Here she throws open the door of a large, well-furnished room, which leads into a smaller one, and that into a dressing-room, begging us to be good enough to content ourselves with these, as her best apartments are occupied. We express ourselves quite satisfied with the same, only asking that dinner may be brought in as soon as possible. With another grand curtsy, she leaves us to attend to it.

Laying aside our bonnets and shawls, Fräulein Marie and I begin a tour of inspection of the two rooms, to examine some fine engravings hanging on the walls. Conspicuous in the smaller are the portraits of the King of Prussia and Prince Frederic Charles (Commander of the 3rd Army Corps at Düppel), hung in handsome gilt frames. They were, I believe, gifts from those distinguished personages. In the larger room Danish royalty reigned supreme. There was the favourite full-length portrait of the late king, in uniform, with the great bearskin cap on. The face is (perhaps I should rather say, has been) handsome. The well-drawn eyebrows tell you what shape the forehead must be, a good prominent nose, and from underneath the busby shine the blue eyes, with that look of thorough genial good-humour which, in the eyes of his people, went so far towards covering a multitude of sins, and his thorough Danism redeemed the rest—in the sight of one portion of his subjects, at least. Then there is a large print of numberless vignettes, representing the different branches of the wide-spreading Danish family tree, so intermixed and interwoven that had you the patience and the wisdom to hear and understand, I have neither the wit nor the will to speak and explain how they are all bound up together, yet each separate and distinct.

The table is "decked" at the upper end of the room, and whilst the five courses of the well-dressed dinner are served in slow succession (whether in regard for our digestion, or out of more regard for the diners in the best apartments, I can't say), the benign face of the aged Thorwaldsen looks down upon us from the wall, with its expression of manly firmness mingled with a childlike simplicity and faith; and Oehlenschläger's earnest, almost severely preoccupied look seems to take no heed of any outward circumstance.

Probst V——, who has pulled out his watch every two or three

minutes for the last half-hour at least, says, "It is time I should go to the palace. Will you walk with me as far as the castle? and as I suppose I shall not be kept long, you might show our 'Miss' about the pleasure-grounds, and then we could meet at the 'Paper-mill' coffee-house, and do the rest of the sightseeing together." So, continuing the road we entered the town by, which runs due east and west (the road, not the town), we came to where, for about a hundred yards it is bordered on both sides by water. The Schlei, as it is called, is an arm of the sea running in a south-westerly direction, now narrower, now broader, some thirty miles inland, till it ends in a succession of lakes close by Schleswig. It is a dull grey day, but not foggy; there is a hard, clear light in the sky which makes everything stand out in sharp bold outlines, more distinct than on those very fine days when the sun dazzles the sight. Earth, sea, and sky are of one uniform leaden colour, and the, deep sullen waters of the Schlei remind one of that dark deed in Danish history, when, in accordance with secret orders, a helpless victim was thrown into its dark waves, whose murder branded the criminal with the double crime of fratricide and regicide.* The water on the north, or castle side, is narrow, being little more than a dyke, but to the south it presents a wide expanse. Opposite us, half a mile distant, lies the little island of Möwenberg, where the seagulls are allowed to build their nests and breed their young in undisturbed peace; and then on a certain day, and for a certain time, both specified by the mayor, seagull shooting begins.

At the foot of the castle avenue we say good-bye to the Herr Probst, who has a little farther to go into Friedrichsberg or Neustadt, as this long western suburb is called, before reaching the palace, where his presence is required. There are two in Friedrichsberg—Bjelke's, and the Prince's palace, the respective residences of the Austrian and Prussian commissioners. The former, lying within gunshot of us, was the property of Prince Carl of Glücksburg, brother to the present King of Denmark. Almost adjoining it stands the railway station. Some say it was built thus close on purpose to spoil the palace, simply for the mean gratification of petty spite. Whatever the reason, certain it is that it is too near to be pleasant. But we cannot depend upon the numerous tales of the sort one is constantly hearing from both parties: for instance, some of the beautiful trees lining the noble avenue we are now walking up were cut down by the Danes to form a barricade just before they withdrew from Schleswig; but a German friend told me it was done simply with a view to spoiling it for the conquerors; and this was said in all sincerity, and firmly believed in.

* King Eric VI., surnamed Plogpenning, 1241.

Schloss Gottorff is not an elegant structure; I know no name for the style of its architecture, and think it has no resemblance to any away from these parts. It presents a rather imposing front: a handsome portico, but too small for the size of the building, is flanked on either side by thirteen windows; the next story has the one over the entrance extra, and the next the same. If the façade is stiff, the stunted square tower that rises from the centre of the building, and is crowned by a small belfry, is right-down ugly. Then, for the frontage of twenty-seven windows it has only a depth of three, so that when we see it otherwise than full front, it presents no great appearance of solidity. Adjoining it in the rear are barracks, but they form no part of the building proper, the whole of which is now occupied by Prussian troops.

We have not gone far from the castle when Fräulein Marie, who has been prying about in all directions after I don't know what, suddenly calls to me in satisfied tones—

“Ah, here it is, I thought I should find it!”

“Find what?”

“Come and see.”

“Well, I don't see anything.”

“Yes, you do, for this small portion of mud wall once formed part of the first Christian church in the Cimbrian peninsula,* built by Ansgar, the Apostle of the North, perhaps better known to you as Anscharius.”

In 827, King Harald Klak, who had gone to Germany on a marauding expedition, came back a Christian, and was baptised of Ansgar, whom he brought with him, that he might preach Christianity to his heathen subjects. Notwithstanding the example of their leader, it was long before his grim warriors would stoop to hearken to the new religion, which acknowledged a power stronger than brute force, and taught that there was something nobler than mere physical courage. And when he thought he had succeeded in establishing Christianity among the Cimbrian barbarians, more especially in Holstein, these very Norsemen, under their new king, Eric I., became heathens once more, destroyed the churches and schools Ansgar had erected, and, in 847, plundered Hamburg, which for the last nine years had been an archbishopric (the second only in Germany), and Ansgar, who was archbishop, had to flee for his life to Bremen, where the archbishopric was then laid. After this raid, Eric himself was converted, and his successor, Eric II., also forwarded as much as possible Ansgar's missionary labours, which extended all over Denmark, Sweden, and Norway, and which gained for him the title of “tutelar saint” or “apostle of

* Others say the Cathedral of Ribe, in Jutland.

the north." What must have been the dauntless courage and indefatigable spirit of the man who could see his labours of twenty years destroyed at a single stroke, and then begin the same work all over again, till, step by step, he had won back all, and more than all, he had before lost! Nor did his efforts to civilise these rude barbarians cease till the brave heart was worn out by the hard battle he had fought. He died, a prematurely old man, on the 3rd February, 865, only about sixty-four years of age, being born, it is supposed, near Picardy, in the year 801.*

As we wander through the pleasure-grounds, we come upon a large stone grotto and fountain, whose streams of water are dry, and the handsome double flight of broad stone steps leading up to it have a dismally deserted air, as if they missed the light tread of the court ladies ascending and descending. The forest beyond is pretty extensive and well wooded; the trees, particularly beech and elm, are unusually fine. If the foliage were not so thick, we might see, from the top of this hill, how the castle and grounds are on quite a little island, surrounded as they are by water, natural or artificial. We are guided to the paper-mill by the sound of music, and on nearing the garden we see the Herr Probst already awaiting us, seated in a little summer-house, with a cup of coffee beside him and a pipe in his mouth.

"Ah, that is a good sign!" says Fräulein Marie; "for my father never smokes when his mind is in the least disturbed; he says he always feels then as if it would choke him; so we may be sure all has gone off well. But see, he is coming towards us!"

The first word he says is, "I have been worrying myself for the last forty-eight hours quite uselessly; the reason I was wanted was entirely different to what I thought—merely about my visitation; that business was soon got over, and I am now at your service for the rest of the day."

So, after listening to the music for a little, we retrace our steps, and are again on the piece of road which joins the old town to the new. I have said that Flensburg is long, but Schleswig is twice as long, and more than twice as straggling. It is not built in a straight line, but, owing to a bend in the Schlei, in an irregular semicircle. Though the nominal capital of the duchy, it is much smaller than Flensburg, having only 11,000 inhabitants, whilst the latter has a population of over 16,000. Arrived in front of our hotel once more, we turn due south, and enter the Altstadt or Schleswig proper. It is divided into the Holm and Lolfuss. Now "Holm" is both a German and a Danish word, signifying "hill" or

* On the thousandth anniversary of the day of his death a special service was held in every church in the duchy.

"island;" but what Lolfuss may mean, I don't know, nor did I ever meet with anyone who could tell me.

The cathedral is the grand object of interest for visitors, and for that we make direct. If I found the architecture of Schloss Gottorff of no particular style, what shall I say of my first view of the Domkirche? There it stands before me, a substantial, well-proportioned, red brick barn; nothing in its outward appearance, except the size and the inevitable little belfry, would lead one to suppose that it was anything else. This is how it looks from the west end, which has no window, but numerous long, narrow loopholes, and a couple of monster buttresses, which are more useful than ornamental. But as we turn to the north side there are five or six long, narrow, high-pointed windows, with a massive buttress between each; and then we come to the north entrance, which is also very unpretending. Only over the great door what, to my short sight, seems nothing but a rough-hewn granite slab, which I should have passed under without giving it further notice, but that, being told to examine it more closely, I look again, and then I see it is a piece of rude sculpture, but so mutilated and effaced by the wear and tear of time that it is difficult to tell whether the figures represented were intended for men or animals. Truly that piece of stone carving must be centuries older than the church itself. I have used the words "church" and "cathedral" indiscriminately, because it is called by the two names collectively, *Dom-kirche*; the reason, I imagine, being that, built when the Roman Catholic was the only Christian Church in this land, it was at first a cathedral; but when the Reformation came, and the inhabitants became Protestant, as the Lutheran Church of Germany knows no bishop, there could be no longer a cathedral; so they and called it the cathedral church.

The building, on entering, strikes me as being entirely different from what I expected after seeing the outside. The disappointment that caused me is forgotten now, looking at the interior. That plain exterior, over which the eye ran so easily, was very deceptive. I was not prepared to see the three long aisles and the high arched roof, with its beautifully-groined vaulting, that springs from the wall on either side, and just touches the two rows of tall, square pillars only to meet in yet loftier arches overhead. Still, fair as are the proportions, I cannot find the building beautiful. The plain whitewashed walls and pillars are not relieved by the slightest attempt at ornamentation, and the strong light pours in through the many windows, making my poor eyes ache with the glare. What it must be on a sunny day, I don't know, and never wish to. By way of relief, I think of our old cathedrals of dark grey granite, with their

"— storied windows richly dight,
Casting a dim religious light,"

and am thankful that I live in a land where there is more stone than a few Wandersteine (erratic boulders), and that a certain little out-of-the-way village where I shall be in a few weeks has a church rich in both.

But we have only seen the body of the cathedral ; let us turn to the chancel. The east end of the church terminates in an apse of such size and height that it might almost be taken for a rounded choir. Immediately at the foot of the seven steps which lead to it stands the pulpit of black oak, richly carved. The altar itself is a very small, low, semicircular table, but from it rises a magnificent reredos of the trypdich form, reaching almost to the top of the window behind, and the extended doors or wings nearly touching those on either side of it. It is of oak, all carved in high relief ; the upper part is perforated, and so delicate are the slender spires and minarets, and the tracery that forms a niche of its own for every group, that it hardly appears an exaggeration to say that it looks like lacework. The lower portion is cut in wood several inches thick ; so in the centre group, which represents the Crucifixion, the foreground is taken up by the holy women, the Roman soldiery, and the chief priests ; behind the three crosses rises the hill of Calvary ; and the towers and pinnacles of Jerusalem form the rest of the background, whilst angels are seen ministering to Christ and the penitent thief. The subjects of the other groups are also taken from the life of our Lord, beginning with Judas covenanting for the thirty pieces of silver, and representing the Passion, His burial, and preaching to the spirits in prison, the repentance of Judas, and the Resurrection and Ascension, besides many single figures—our first parents worshipping the All-Father, and others too numerous to mention. To examine it properly one would require as many days as we had minutes to spare. Each figure is a gem, and of itself a study ; but those which most attracted my admiration were the All-Father and the Council of the Chief Priests. Schleswig-Holstein is pre-eminently the land of wood-carving. A few weeks ago a party of *savans* and archæologists came to spy out the riches of the land. At Kiel they were surprised and delighted to see so valuable a collection of rare old wood-carving as that they found in the private museum of Herr — ; but when they came to Schleswig these learned gentlemen were still more surprised, and still more gratified. They pronounced the reredos of Schleswig Cathedral to be unexcelled, if not unequalled, by not only any reredos, but wood-carving of any kind in all Europe. Even Nürnberg could not boast of anything finer. Though finished in the year 1521, it is in admirable preservation ; only in two places did I notice that it had sustained any injury, and they were both of a very trifling nature. And the sculptor who executed this work of art ? Of him very little is

known, except that he was a poor artisan named Hans Brüggeman, who carved it for the chapel of a convent where it was originally placed. Tradition says that as soon as he had finished it, the monks put out his eyes that he might never be able to do another like it. But let us hope that those monks who could so highly appreciate his talent would do all in their power to help to develop it still more, if only for the selfish reason that he might continue to enrich their monastery.

"Do you see this?" says the Herr Probst, pointing to a stone font standing near the vestry-door; "how old should you think it is?"

"Well, I suppose it is very old, because the letters round it are so worn; but really, I'm not a judge, perhaps three or four hundred years."

"If you add another four hundred, you will be nearer the truth. Years ago, some men fishing in the North Sea drew this up in their net. Of course no one knows how it got there; but it is supposed that it was thrown into the sea by our forefathers after one of their many relapses into heathenism."

The girl who has been showing us over the place, seeing we are about to depart, hastens up, saying—

"You have not yet seen where the great duke lies, with his two wives beside him." When we say we don't care about it, she seems utterly thunderstruck. "What, not see the two beautiful marble coffins, one all black, and the other all white? Well, I never! Why of course you must, every one always does; I have unlocked the door on purpose."

Not wishing to hurt her feelings by another refusal, we hasten after her down the aisle, and peep in the dark little cell, whilst our guide triumphantly points out the two sarcophagi, the one shining like polished ebony, the other milk white.

"Why was he called the great duke?" I ask of our guide.

"Well, I don't know; I suppose because of the great coffin he is in."

"You say both his wives died before he did; which lies in the common coffin?"

"Well, I don't know, I think 'tis his second wife, but I'm not sure; it might be his first." After which not very certain information, not caring to decide the matter by trying to make out the inscriptions, we beat a retreat, steadily refusing to visit any of the other vaults.

On our way back to the hotel we take a partly different route, passing the gymnasium, a long low building, very different to the handsome grammar school in Flensburg, and under the "hohe Thor," or high gateway, a quaint wooden archway, surmounted by

tower of some height,* and through the one square the town possesses, when we find ourselves on the old road again.

If Schleswig is smaller than Flensburg, it is also infinitely quieter. Not even the Prussians have as yet been able to wake up its inhabitants. I do not wish to exaggerate, but in our walk from the one end of the town to the other, which has taken us about an hour and a half, we have not, I think, met more than fifty people, children included. At one part, where the grass was growing pretty freely between the stones of the pavement, I remember two or three boys passing us on the opposite side of the street; further on two men were painting a cart; some six or seven were building a house; a few women standing in groups of twos and threes at the shop-doors, gossiping, and staring at the strangers; a few children playing in the road complete the number; but of foot passengers I have no remembrance, nor to have heard the sound of a wheel or a horse's hoof. When we get to the hotel, the carriage is already waiting for us, and as we drive off, the last sight that we have of Schleswig is good Madame Esselbach, standing at the door of her hotel, still curtseying.

We return home by an entirely different way to that by which we came, passing through the fertile province of Angeln, with its cornfields and its orchards, and the large comfortable farm-houses, where the lights twinkle brightly; and I shut my eyes, and try to picture what the land and our Anglo-Saxon forefathers were like when they left it to pass over to Britain. Somehow I find Field-Marshal Wrangel was their leader, and that on his landing, Ansgar met him and told him to renounce the worship of Thor, and Madame Esselbach, with a stately curtsey, offered him a cup of coffee, and begged him to enter the castle of her father, the King of Denmark—but no, 'tis the Herr Probst's voice, saying, "This is where you get down, my dear miss; good-night, and I hope you have had a pleasant day."

L. L.

* This the Prussians have since had pulled down; partly, I believe, because it obstructed the passage, and partly because it was no longer safe.

PROGRESS

WE have cause to be thankful that we live in an age of progress, and, on that account, we strive and strain to advance yet further in the use of the advantages which God has given us. The higher the standpoint the wider the view; we do not sit contently down, because we think that the obstacles which rise before us are insurmountable, and the glorious heights inapproachable; the spirit of our times is one of never-resting desire and untiring energy. Yet, with all this, we do not seem to reach the end of our quest; our finite advances seem but to enable us to realise that there are incommensurate distances beyond them. We are not likely to take for example Alexander the Great, weeping—as his flatterers said—because there were no more worlds for him to conquer, when our victories over our own ignorance bring us no further than the very frontiers of knowledge, to learn that there is not one thing in the world on which we can lay our hand and say, “I know all about this.” Such was the testimony of Newton, when, by patient study, he had placed himself at the head of his age in scientific knowledge and renown: “I see that the great ocean of truth is lying unexplored before me, and I am only like a child picking up the shells and seaweed, which it casts forth upon its shore.” “The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done; and there is no new thing under the sun. Is there anything whereof it may be said, ‘See, this is new?’ It hath been already of old time which was before us.”

Among the princes who have been in advance of their times, as the phrase is, we must give an honourable place to Solomon. Some may deem his reign inglorious, or sneer at his barbaric splendour; but, nevertheless, down to this very day his name remains in the East to represent the very ideal of excellence, both in learning and natural wisdom. In the book of Ecclesiastes, he tells of strange undercurrents of weariness and sadness in the midst of all his glory; desire upon desire gratified, yet not satisfying, and all vanity and vexation of spirit. Yet Solomon was no selfish voluptuary, such as the Roman emperor who offered rewards and honours to anyone who should invent for him some new sensation, nor did he think with scorn of the pleasant land because others had trodden it before him; rather his wisdom was teaching him that those who lived in old times had been as wise, and as great, and as joyous as himself. He would check his fellow-men in their mad, self-seeking struggles, wherein each would have, if it were possible, an eminence whereon to stand alone. “The thing which hath been, it is that which

shall be, and there is no new thing under the sun." The experience of the wise king seems to have been presenting itself afresh from age to age at every turn of human progress, whether abstract or practical, in the rich plains of enterprise, or among the everlasting hills of truth. "It hath been so of old time," and the great Householder bringeth forth out of His treasures, separated or together, "things new and old."

Our business at present will be to consider the progress of mankind in science and the arts of life. Let us note, meanwhile, that in religion the only true progress consists in carrying out into fuller practice the immutable principles which have been already revealed; but in the natural sciences we have only facts set before us, and by classifying them and reasoning upon them, men arrive at principles or laws, whence they advance to discoveries. Many of the ancient languages have no word corresponding to our idea "to invent;" and a certain significance underlies this fact. It might seem at first sight that each generation of men begins where its predecessor left off; and so, standing on the best vantage-ground, must make its progress accordingly. But it is not so. Much upon which we pride ourselves is, in fact, only old material worked up again; and much, meanwhile, which our forefathers possessed, is lost, at all events, for a time, so as to be practically useless to us.

If we have added some to the arts of life, we have lost others altogether. It is true that machinery trains up a generation of skilled workmen, but many of the old handicrafts have become actually extinct, and it is an open question whether, if we are to judge of moral dignity by the success which a man makes for himself in his own calling, we shall not have to set the old trades, with their hereditary secrets and their hard-won manual skill, somewhat higher than the system which gives the workman a machine almost self-acting, and makes it his only duty to help it to do its work. No exercise of man's intellect can surpass that of the designer of such a machine; no triumph prouder or better merited than that which he earns by his success; and there is no reason why we should work with the knife when we can have a box of tools; yet there stands forward the fact, which none can gainsay, that the factory operative, physically and mentally, is, at all events at present, a degeneration from the hand-worker of days gone by. The arts of war are ever changing more than the arts of peace; there, too, some secrets have perished, but iron plates and rifled guns are all important at sea, and on land there are few hand-to-hand combats. The newest improvement in the cannon or the rifle wins the victory; not the most artfully-tempered sword, or the most cunningly-worked armour; nor yet the strongest arm, or the boldest heart, or even the most skilful plan. Henceforth

there will be very few *soldiers' battles*, such as the Balaclava Charge. There was a time when warriors considered the bow a cowardly weapon; after that English and Scottish archers decided many a battle by their cloth-yard shafts, until the yew-tree for the bow gave place to the walnut-tree for the gun-stock. Yet the bow was a good weapon in its way, for it has been estimated that in many battles of the last century the weight of iron and lead spent in cannon and musket-balls was about equal to the weight of the men who were killed thereby. Long ago the Chinese understood the preparation of an explosive mixture resembling gunpowder. They used it, however, for fireworks only; not to destroy life. It is among their traditions, that all good things should come to them from the west; we of the west seem to have derived from them a very dangerous secret.

We may, in many things, reduce our estimate of ourselves and of our state of progress. The ancients, in the midst of their love of art and military glory, were not forgetful or incapable of more peaceful and practical efforts. Some of the water reservoirs of ancient Jerusalem are still in use. The public sewers of ancient Rome have survived most of the temples; still there remain the traces of the canal which Xerxes cut across the Isthmus of Athos, a task which cost more expenditure of human life than the most famed and the most cruel of modern works of tyranny—the preparing the foundations of St. Petersburg. Of course, there are engineering works of modern times which no amount of energy and labour could have accomplished of old, for lack of scientific appliances, such as the bridges over the Menai Straits, the Jumna, and the St. Lawrence, or the Saltash viaduct; yet, in the time of Cleopatra, ships were transported overland from the Nile to the Red Sea; and the same enterprise which made Alexandria the great corn port of the world connected the districts of Egypt together by a network of canals. In rivalry of the bridge of boats which Xerxes threw across the Hellespont, Caligula constructed an embankment across the Bay of Naples. The Roman roads are still to be traced in Europe, Asia, and Africa. So are the Roman walls in Britain, stretching from sea to sea; yet the great wall of China exceeds them all.

We do not seem, after all, to have done very much in applying the principles of nature to our own purposes. The stem of the oak supplied the design for the Eddystone Lighthouse; the ribs of the Victoria Regia for the Exhibition building; the jointed tail of the lobster for flexible water-pipes; the Pholas for the shield used in tunnelling; the fish's tail for the screw propeller; and a few more instances might be found,—but what are they, after all?

Industry is a surer trade than originality. Many people can hit upon a brilliant idea who know not how to make it useful; where-

fore many have approached to the very verge of discoveries, but have gone no further. Even the old philosophical magazines contain half-developed ideas of great things found to be lost again. So has it been in the study of the principles of nature :—the displacement of water must have been observed thousands of times before Archimedes perceived in it the theory of specific gravity. Many apples had fallen from trees before Newton was led to reason upon the mutual attraction of matter. The country belle who coloured her ribbons more highly than her neighbours by preparing the dye in a pewter vessel, had made an electro-chemical discovery, though she knew it not. The Gulf Stream must have stranded many a piece of sugar-cane on the western shores of the Old World before Columbus (reviving Pythagoras's theory) saw therein a proof of the existence of a new land westwards. It has pleased God that in this age many unexpected and astonishing things have been discovered. He has crowned with success the labours of patient engineers who have searched out many things. We have opened up new countries, which, if ever inhabited, have been lying empty for centuries ; but the discoveries of science, the energies of merchants, and the labour of artisans, have been aided, though they may know it not, by mighty unexplored secrets, to which their success has been due. We cannot explain the results of the means which we use, and are content to believe that there are some powers and agencies whose very nature we know not, which, when the world advances further, will be understood in principle as well as felt in working. Meanwhile, it is God's will that they should be aiding us, long before we have dreamed of their existence, far less turned over the page of the book of nature on which their secret is written.

There is a noble passage in Sophocles, wherein the poet looked round twenty-two centuries ago upon the triumphs which in his time man had wrought over the works of creation :—

“There are many marvels,” he says, “and man is the greatest of all. He causes the stormy wind to bear him over the white crested sea ; and as to earth, though it can never be destroyed, or fail, he wearies it, from year to year, turning up its surface by horses and ploughs. In his snares and nets he takes the birds of the air, the beasts of the earth, and the fishes of the sea ; he subjugates the wild creatures that walk on the mountains, and his yoke is borne by the horse with its arching neck, and the wild bull that never tires. Moreover, he has practised the art of speech and thought, free as the wind ; and the customs of living in cities. He shields himself from heat, and rain, and frost ; for everything he has a plan, save for one thing only : he can even devise escapes from diseases, but he cannot flee from death.”

PROGRESS

Ancient writers tell us that the first effigy ever made of an ideal deity was that of "Earth, the mother of all." Afterwards, under many names and in many strange forms, were worshipped the principle whereby the universe was supported. Happy are we, who look up through nature unto nature's God. In the works of Pliny, the naturalist, there are many very beautiful and suggestive passages, rising higher from earth towards heaven than the cold materialism which has ever been the disgrace of mankind. He says that—"all things seem to be created for the sake of men; that it is impossible sufficiently to admire the providence of nature; that there was a sacred Parent of all things, ever providing remedies for man." He was a worshipper of nature alone; but he read some of her lessons aright.

God's law, unchangeable, will abide for ever; it is His will that the seed is to be sown, so that in time the reaper may fill his hand and bind his sheaves; it is His will that some should each day go forth from their homes to their work and their labour; and that others should go down to the sea in ships; that lands may send to lands the interchange of their products, along the highway of nations. So must it ever be; let us charge ourselves, meanwhile, not to forget the Giver in the gifts, nor to claim for our own even what we have gained by the sweat of our face. How little did Adam and Eve and their children know of the treasures which the Creator had laid up in the soil, in the waters, in the rocks, in the plants, and in the bowels of the earth. Many thousand years have gone by; men have noticed much, and found out many inventions; and now in the world's old age we are beginning to learn how much we do not know. Who can tell how far the generations yet to come may penetrate into the knowledge which from us is hidden?

We can hardly fancy to ourselves a time when the use of steam was unknown; yet there doubtless was an age in which fire was somewhat of a mystery, and perhaps many a rude experiment was made before its various uses were turned to account; exactly as we are now endeavouring to find out how wide and multitudinous are the applications of what we call the electric agency. Not only was there a time when no adventurer had trusted himself in a balloon among the clouds, but there was also a time when no one had dared to float on the water out of sight of land, and no mines had been sunk in the earth. We know where the first great battle was fought—in the vale of Siddim, on the accursed ground, soon afterwards hidden for evermore from mortal sight by the Dead Sea: who knoweth where the last battle will be?

We know not what, or where, was the first discovery or invention in which men had a part. Nor do we know when or where the last shall be; when man shall need no longer to devise new things

or apply old things to new uses. We may be proud to feel that we are transmitting to posterity a richer heritage than we received, not for our own vain-glory, as Augustus boasting that he had found his Rome built of brick and left it built of marble, but because we know that for this purpose we were sent into the world—to leave things better than we found them. Such are true victories of patience over difficulties ; such are honest rivalries for man against man.

F. J.

A JOURNEY THROUGH THE WATERS

I LEFT Paris, writes a *Queen's Messenger*, in the spring of 1856 for Marseilles, as the bearer of some important despatches for Constantinople, as also for the commander-in-chief of the army, then before Sebastopol. A few days only subsequent to my departure a succession of very heavy rains and storms had occurred—so heavy and so incessant that the banks of the Rhone and the Soane had overflowed, and the luxuriant plains of France were inundated for leagues in extent. At the very moment when the flood was at its worst I reached Lyons, and you may conceive my astonishment when, on driving from the railway-station to my hotel, I found even in the public square of the city that the wheels of my conveyance were up to their axles in water, which, ere I arrived at my destination, all but entered the vehicle.

Every possible argument was used by the landlord of the hotel to convince me that any attempt on my part to proceed by railway would be in vain. There I was, and there I must remain till the water subsided. The railway was stopped, the trains were at a dead fix; so forward I could not go unless I was prepared to become a kind of official Leander, and swim all the way to Terascon.

In this dilemma, without losing heart, I retired to bed for a few hours' repose, after endeavouring to appease my appetite on the toughest fowl that ever was hatched. But before retiring I ordered the servants to call me at daybreak, and to secure for me a carriage at the door, for which I was prepared to pay liberally.

Fortunately, my orders were promptly obeyed, and being up and dressed with the rising of the sun, I struggled, by dint of bribes and persuasions, through mud and water, to the railway-station, when whom should I find on the platform but the Pope's nuncio, the Pope's nuncio's secretary, and the Pope's nuncio's secretary's secretary, all as eager as myself to get forward. They were proceeding southwards to meet an illustrious cardinal, who was expected to arrive at Marseilles, on his way from Rome to Paris, where he was to act as proxy for the Pope at the baptism of the young Prince Napoleon. No doubt the presence of such important personages had great weight with the railway authorities, for after waiting a considerable time, the day being fine and hot, a steam-engine was prepared, and we started on our dangerous but hopeful journey.

The scene was most painful—nay, melancholy in the extreme, as we glided along the top of an embankment of earth, on each side of which, instead of fertile corn-fields and spring-bedecked valleys, we beheld nothing but rushing and angry waters stretching far in

the distance, with here and there tree tops and the chimney tops of farmhouses appearing above the flood. Sad as were the feelings of my heart while gazing at such a scene of desolation, I own that I could not help wondering if my companion, his Excellency, or Eminence, could swim; as, had the embankment—which had no doubt been weakened by the pressure of the waters—happened to give way, there was no alternative for us except that of a ducking, or more likely a drowning.

Thanks be to Providence, however, we arrived safely at Valence, and the line being there reported practicable as far as Avignon, onwards was the word,—still through a foaming sea of angry waters. At Avignon, however, we came to a dead stop. Some four leagues beyond, the railway embankment had been cut to save the town of Terascon, and his Excellency, his Excellency's secretary, and the secretary's secretary, with a very small display of pluck or reluctance, abandoned the struggle, and returned forthwith to Paris or Lyons, as might be. In the mean time I had formed very different ideas on the subject, and at once declined their courteous offers that I should accompany them.

As I stood alone by the side of my belongings, I beheld the train glide away on its return, leaving me to my fate. It was by no means a desirable one. There I was upon some three yards of dry land between two seas, with miles and miles of embankment winding through the flood, a solitary Englishman in a foreign land, and, for all that I knew to the contrary, the fate of Turkey or Europe in my carpet bag! I looked for a moment on the lofty castle of Avignon—an ancient papal palace,—which alone appeared to me to be high and dry in the landscape, then at the vast ocean of waters spreading around me, and my heart swelled with uncontrolled emotion; when, happily, aid came to me in the shape of a rude, leaky punt, which seemed only a few planks hastily nailed together, scarcely watertight. But to me the fragile bark was worth its weight in silver. No distant sail in sight descried by the wrecked mariner on a raft was more welcome—no prisoner released from bondage ever surely felt more grateful than I did at that moment. In that frail boat I forthwith embarked with my precious charge, and was punted along the main streets of the town through which I had so often walked. The scene was one that I shall never forget. Here we met a man floating in a hip-bath, handing up loaves of bread fixed to the end of a pole to the upper windows of the half-starved citizens,—for the water had risen far above the lower stories, and all chance of escaping was cut off; then a man in a large tub carrying messages from house to house; then a floating human body; then the carcase of a sheep or cow; while numerous sad faces were gazing from the windows in despair.

Through such a scene as this I was punted onwards to the Prefecture near the ancient palace I have named,—sitting, certainly not in the pride of place, but on my portmanteau, [prepared, in case of accident, for a ducking or a swim.

Well might the nuncio have decided on returning. Gladly would I have done so likewise, had I not felt that duty called me onwards; and I experienced some pride of heart in the endeavour to vanquish all difficulties. At length I reached dry land—that is to say, a flight of stone steps, and having placed my effects under the safe charge of a sentry, I made my way to the prefect. Here again I encountered a scene most painful to behold and never to be forgotten. I beheld women and children crying aloud for succour and for bread; dead bodies brought in from time to time, drowned by the flood, and ranged along the wall of the corridor for recognition. In the midst of this unhappy scene I found the prefect doing his best, and doing far more than most men would or could have done to calm the public mind, now raging with hunger and terror. Having introduced myself and produced my credentials, he forthwith begged me with much kindness to wait awhile in his private apartment till he could grant me ten minutes' attention to listen to my wants; and, to do him only justice, I have rarely met with any one who appeared more calm, and firm, and practical in the midst of turbulence and dismay.

At length he entered, and taking me kindly by the hand, with eyes half filled with tears, briefly remarked that the present state of things was most dreadful. "But by God's will it will soon pass away," he added, "the weather is improving—the waters are already diminishing." Then, after listening patiently to all I had to tell, he said, "You wish to get on as soon as possible. Well, there is but one chance, and that is hazardous—nay, full of danger. If you can gain the bridge—which is, as you know, cut off from the town by the flood, you will find the land on the other side of the river high and dry. You may pass the mountains to Nisme, and from thence return again to Marseilles Railway at Terascon. I will give you a boat with four stout rowers and two soldiers to carry your effects. If you can reach one of the arches of the bridge by rowing against the stream, which is now running like a torrent, you will find a succession of hooks or iron steps, which reach to the parapet. Once on that bridge you are safe; but if you miss the hooks, your boat is at the mercy of the flood. Will you try it?"

"I will," I replied.

"Be it so," said the courteous prefect; "then here is an order to press horses on the other side. May God be with you and protect you!" he added.

Half an hour afterwards I found myself in a large, strong boat,

with four powerful rowers and two soldiers by my side, and we started on the angry waters. At first we passed through two or three narrow streets or canals, closed in by the houses, and then merged, as it were, into what, but a few days previously, doubtless had been beautiful, flower-bedecked gardens, and thence eventually into the main river. Not a word was uttered, save by the "bow oar," who bid us sit steady, be silent, and leave the result to him.

At this moment the men were pulling for their lives against a stream which rushed with a noise and apparent rapidity which my pen can scarcely describe. Hard as they pulled against it, however, we were fast approaching one of the arches of the bridge, when the speaker carefully and quietly placed the oar in the boat, rose on his knees, took a strong, looped cord in his hand, and with great dexterity cast one of the loops on an iron hook, as we were rushing through the arch! It held us fast—we were so far safe! "Thank God!" I exclaimed, in my inmost heart. Had we missed it, Heaven alone knows what would have been our fate. One of the boatmen immediately clambered up on the bridge—no great feat of difficulty—and bade me follow; this I declined, begging that my despatches might take the precedence. Our worthy allies, the Frenchmen, were evidently astonished at my refusal, but I was firm on this point: despatches first, self afterwards. Had my body floated to the Mediterranean, I should have made a vacancy for some happy applicant; whereas, had the despatches in my charge gone down in the dark, rushing waters of the Rhone, I had no alternative but to follow them. Light was my heart, then, when I beheld my belongings hoisted over the parapet of the bridge of Avignon—about which bridge, by-the-bye, there is a well-known French song that I have never been able to obtain—and lighter still were my footsteps as I followed my bag and baggage up the fragile iron steps. Once on the bridge, however, I lost no time in reaching the opposite shore, and presenting my order for horses at a small inn which overlooks the river. But the long spring day had passed, and the bright moon looked calmly from a cloudless sky upon the troubled waters, when, in a sort of *chaise de poste*, to which were harnessed a horse and a mule, I rattled off on my way to Nisme, which place I reached as the sun once more shone over the beautiful landscape.

Having despatched a telegram to Marseilles, entreating the authorities to delay for a few hours the *Messagerie* steamer, bound on that day for Constantinople, pending my arrival, and having received a reply in the affirmative, I was able to sit down, with a heart full of gratitude and cheerfulness, to a refreshing cup of "café au lait;" after which I did what most Englishmen would

have done under similar circumstances—indulged in a good wash, and then started by the first train for Terascon, and so on, without further interruption, to Marseilles.

My misfortunes, however—or, rather, difficulties—were by no means over, even on reaching that commercial city. Conceive my disgust, as the train glided along through rocks and olive-trees, when, approaching the coast, I beheld the boat in which I had hoped to take passage steaming rapidly away past the Château d'If. I had either been purposely deceived, or was behind my time. Here was a dilemma: I scarcely knew how to act. I felt that I had struggled thus far to be beaten at last. Happily, most happily, I found in the harbour a small British man-of-war steamer, commanded by a gallant and high-bred English naval officer. This was good fortune indeed! After a brief consultation, he decided on taking me to Malta, and a most delightful passage we had; for if there be aught, to my mind, that can make steaming on the rude ocean endurable, with fair weather or foul, it is to know one's self on board a British man-of-war, whose commander is a high-bred English sailor.

Suffice it to say that on my arrival I was transferred, by the courtesy of the French admiral, on board a steam corvette belonging to that nation, then about to start for Constantinople, there being no English craft at disposal in harbour. I scarcely recollect which was the slowest, the vessel or her captain: a more eccentric or taciturn native of *la belle France* I have rarely met. He was evidently labouring under some affliction, or was overwhelmed with disgust at the service, which he subsequently informed me he was about to quit, his period of active duty being nearly over. "The sooner the better!" I thought. Nevertheless I had little cause, on the whole, to be dissatisfied with my position, still less to complain of any discourtesy or want of attention on his part, though he was nearly the cause of my death ere we parted. His little French dinners were good and well served; the quality of his claret was first-rate, though we had scarcely enough of it; the after-dinner coffee and *chasse* always forthcoming and excellent; but conversation I found impossible, and so we ate and drank almost in silence. I touched on every topic save that of Waterloo, but from that hour to this I never discovered whether he cared for the imperial master whom he served, or for any one or anything upon this earth, or had one single opinion upon any question—political, artistical, literary, commercial, or social. So after a few vain attempts to make myself agreeable—as it was my duty to do—I retired into myself, and left my companion to his own meditations.

At length—oh, happy sight!—we beheld the Isle of Marmora,

then the Prince's Islands, then the gilded dome of St. Sophia, and found ourselves before that incomprehensible city, so beautiful to behold from the blue waters of the Bosphorus, so dismal to contemplate in its dirty and miserable reality. My spirits rose, for I felt that I had accomplished my task. I had performed my duty in spite of all difficulties in my way, and my mission so far was all but ended. I was about to bid adieu, as I hoped for ever, to the lumbering corvette and the silent commander, his coffee and his miserable grog. In another hour I hoped to be on shore, forgetful of the past, and ready to return once more to my home, sweet home, and fatherland.

As I stood on deck, expecting every moment that orders would be given to stop the vessel, and that I should hear the welcome sound of the anchor splashing into the water, we steamed gently past the admiral's ship. We had scarcely done so when up went a signal, which was immediately replied to; and, to my astonishment and annoyance, I found that increased steam power was put on; Pera and its palaces fast receded from my view; that of the Sultan was already passed; and in my agony I clutched the doctor, who happened to be standing near me, by the collar, and asked whither we were bound. Was it to the Black Sea? Was it to Balaklava? Meanwhile the silent captain stood calmly on the bridge. I and my despatches were as far away from his thoughts as the clouds above the distant mountain tops. What thought he of my mission? What cared he for my anguish? At length, shutting up his confounded glasses, and putting them carefully in their case, he descended with cautious steps to the deck, and turning to me, expressed his regret that he was compelled to take me to Beicos Bay.

"Beicos Bay?" said I, with some anger. "Beicos Bay is ten miles from Pera. The thermometer is at 90; the stream of the Bosphorus running strong. How am I to return?"

"You will find a *caïque*," said the impassable commander, "and the current is in your favour."

"A *caïque*?" I replied. "After all the difficulties I have overcome, my despatches will be delayed six hours. Had you landed me at Tophana, I should have delivered them ere now; and this at the very moment when I was congratulating myself upon having arrived at my destination only twelve hours after the *Messagerie* steamer!"

"I am very sorry, very sorry indeed, Monsieur, *mais que voulez-vous*?" added this illustrious specimen of the maritime power of France, shrugging his shoulders. "Very sorry, inconsolable, but what could I do? The admiral signalled his orders that I should proceed to Beicos Bay to water, and I obeyed. As an English officer, you doubtless understand discipline."

"Discipline be ——" I was about to say something very uncourteous, but recollecting that I was on the quarter-deck of a French man-of-war, and moreover that courtesy to others is only a kind of self-respect, I merely replied, "But why did you not signal that you had one of Her Majesty Queen Victoria's messengers on board, with important despatches? The admiral would have ordered you to put me on shore. Are we not allies?"

"That, Monsieur," returned the "cool captain," again shrugging his shoulders, "was no part of my duty. I wish you good morning." And with this he dived into his cabin. His own officers, with whom I had friendly intercourse, were disgusted, and I swore that——no, I did not swear; the following day, I forgave and forgot him, though he caused me a severe attack of fever.

We reached Beicos Bay, where I went ashore with the doctor. The moment he put his foot on land his whole character appeared to change; his tongue broke loose, and he inveighed, in no measured terms, against the captain's conduct. I found this gentleman a kind and amiable companion. He aided me to find a caïque, which was a crazy affair, with only one man to row it. The distance to Pera was ten miles; a scorching sun blazed above me, from the fierce rays of which I could only protect myself by taking off my coat, and using it as a covering for my head, since I had no umbrella—an indispensable requirement under such circumstances.

At length, half roasted, and half dead with headache and fatigue, I reached the City of the Sultan, and was in some manner compensated for all my troubles by finding that no correspondence whatever had reached the capital, save from Marseilles. I alone had turned up with my despatches, and a few of the latest papers from London—worth a king's ransom; though I should think, by-the-bye, that amount must be a very doubtful one, as it must depend a good deal upon the quality of the monarch held in bondage.

REFLECTIONS ON A SABBATH MORNING

How calm, how peaceful, how serene
 The opening day—blest Sabbath morn !
 Kind Heaven is smiling o'er the scene
 As sweetly as when Christ was born.

The same bright sun is in the sky
 That shone o'er ancient Bethlehem's plain,
 The same kind Father rules on high,
 And sheds His loving smiles again.

Man's work is done, we're free from care ;
 This is the morn by Heaven blest ;
 Let grateful hearts ascend in prayer
 Upon this holy day of rest.

The birds have joined their matin song,
 The trees on high their anthems raise,
 The rocks and hills the strains prolong—
 All Nature hymns her grateful praise.

"The Sabbath day"—emblem divine
 Of that sweet rest in yonder sky,
 Where ransomed spirits sing and shine,
 And with the glittering angels vie.

Rest, free from all earth's sighs and tears ;
 Rest, in that spirit-world above ;
 Rest, through the flight of endless years ;
 Rest, in a Heavenly Father's love.

TUESDAY ; OR, ST. THOMAS'S DAY

CHAPTER III.

"Thee, Saviour, Thee the nation's vows confess,
And never satisfied with seeing, bless."—DRYDEN.

THOUGH fixed not to give up the idea of returning to his see, though resolved not to prolong his stay in a foreign land, reflecting on what he had heard, Becket came to the conclusion not to seek a collision, and therefore determined to proceed to Sandwich instead of landing at Dover, which he had previously contemplated. But this, or indeed any precaution to ensure his personal safety, seemed almost ridiculous from the reports which now in quick succession reached him. They told that all Englishmen rejoiced to hear that he would soon again be among them. Various joyous greetings were resolved upon to commemorate his triumph. Grand banquets were ordered to gratify the orthodox friends of true religion, and superb decorations were preparing for the Cathedral, in which his holy and commanding voice, it was eagerly expected, would speedily be heard once more.

Reuben de Moreville was proceeding to Paris. Having lingered on the way, he had now to take his leave. Misgivings with regard to him in the mind of Becket were set at rest; and no attentions that could fitly acknowledge the service he had desired to render were, on the prelate's part, omitted. Before withdrawing, in a brief interview which Reuben had with Elfrida, she tendered thanks for the generous interest he had taken in her father's life.

"I pray," he said, "that it may not be labour in vain. May he yet be better advised! It is the vice of great minds to despise peril."

Elfrida remarked—"It would almost seem that the peril had passed away, from the latest news received; but she confessed her apprehensions would never be finally set at rest while the Archbishop retained his high position under King Henry."

He admitted that she had too good cause for alarm.

"I would not be superstitious," she resumed, "but I have heard it said and even vouched for by good and learned men, that dependance never can be placed on such a monarch; for that he positively labours under a demoniacal spell."

"Of this there can hardly be a doubt. I have learned from those about him, even from Gilbert Toler, Bishop of London, that he has long been possessed by an evil spirit. Often times will he howl, giving forth sounds most doleful to hear, and wildly gnawing

the wool of the couch on which he lies ; or the straw beneath. That this is true, I can the more readily believe, as it is well-known his grand-dam, the Countess of Anjou, was, by universal reputation, a witch ; and her intimacy with the evil one was, so men of the holy fame positively aver, placed beyond all doubt by her wretched end."

"What was that end?"

"Being at mass, she attempted to look most devout ; when on a sudden, clearly against her will, she passed out of the window, and never was seen again. This fact is on record."

"Indeed!"

"It was to this the venerable Heraclius alluded, who, waiting on the king with the keys of the holy sepulchre, and soliciting him to undertake a crusade, being refused what he prayed, could not refrain from saying the holy land was not to be snatched from the infidels by one who, being from the devil himself, to the devil must perforce return."

"And can we—may we believe that the denizens of another world come themselves, or send their hateful progeny to this?"

"It has been testified through many ages that such things have been known ; and even in our own days spectral appearances of the departed have often been seen."

"Such reports I have heard, but had no proof of their truth."

"Not often may that be expected. It cannot be imagined that those who are no longer in life, whose task of earthly existence has been performed, will, on slight occasions, return to a world from which they have been emancipated. Yet, that spirits of the departed have been seen, I dare not deny ; nay, truth to say, can hardly doubt."

"Indeed! Can you believe in spectral appearances?"

"I will not say that I have looked on a spectre, but that this has *not* occurred, I cannot positively declare."

"Your speech, Reuben, is strange. Is it possible you have beheld aught that seemed to have risen from the grave? Have you looked on a spectre?"

"Unquestionably you have heard—for busy tongues industriously repeat a tale of shame—that connected with the name of Moreville there is a horrid mystery—a cautiously whispered report. To me, as to others, it has been murmured. I must add, it certainly has been discredited, but I grieve to say the denial has been confused—dubious—far from satisfactory. Stricter inquiry was interdicted, and fear has restrained from seeking to know the truth."

"Can this explain your belief in the supernatural?"

"No; but what follows will. Name it not, Elfrida ; for I would not have the weakness bruited, which to you I scruple not to confess."

True or false what is reported of my father, foul reproach fell on my mother. She vanished,—not as the ancestress of our king did, but disappeared,—was certainly separated from her moody lord. Some tell she fled from him, and died far away. Suffice it to say I never knew her—at least, since I gained capacity to remember; but at the house of the canon, where at times I was invited for my holiday, and where it was my hap first to meet you, I saw what one told me was her likeness. The picture made a strong impression on me. I learned it was that of a lady married by the canon to a soldier, whose name I forget.”

“Where did it hang?”

“In the Lebanon Cedar Chamber.”

“I have often looked upon it.”

“Then Elfrida will bear me out that it presented no common features. The animated, youthful beauty I have since learned to admire was not portrayed; but melancholy loveliness, angelic meekness, and indescribable dignity, were there. Its supplicating gentleness failed not to fix attention. It gave the idea of a saint patiently enduring the injuries, and piously deploring the sinfulness of a wicked world. The pale lily, gracefully drooping on its taper stem, images her unassuming air.”

“But it suggested nothing unearthly.”

“Such as it was, my eyes were never tired of gazing on it; and my boyish fancies made it the subject of a hundred fables. One night, awaking, I heard the bell strike one. Of spectres roaming after midnight I had been told, when, turning me around, the moon, then at the full, pouring its unobstructed light into my chamber, fell on those features which I knew so well. I thought the picture had been moved; but that remained below. I shouted with surprise. The canon instantly answered me. He showed me no one else was in the room, assured me there was no danger, and bade me sleep again; and dream of something else.”

“Did the like occur again?”

“Not exactly; but, it might be about a year afterwards, in the same chamber, at a late hour, I was preparing for bed, when the beauty of the night drew me to the window. The former moonlight scene was recalled, and, glancing sideways at the lawn, the self-same apparition—I could have sworn it—met my view.”

“Seemed it to have life?”

“No; I should have described it as exhibiting the pale, rigid composure of death. A corpse lifted from the tomb, its eyes unclosed—those of the spectre, so I must name it, were open—might have presented such an aspect.”

“Spake you to it?”

“Its former visit remembered, and the manner in which it had

been treated by the canon, I determined to be satisfied of its reality. The casement I unclosed, and sprang forward. At that moment the moon lost its light, was veiled in a black cloud, and what I had desired to approach was no longer to be seen."

"But why should a messenger from the other world approach to make no revelation?"

"It might be, Elfrida, I looked not at it with due reverence. Reason cannot explain; but equally incapable is it to dismiss from my bosom the strange impression made by this waking vision."

"I," said Elfrida, "have often heard of strange unearthly voices—of tokens of death; and lately, the archbishop told, mysteriously awful warnings gave him to believe that here he was not to remain; in this lower world, I mean."

"May these deceive! I pray it for your comfort, and for the cause he defends. I must away. Sadness comes over me, to think it will be long before I shall look on Elfrida again. Fearful events may be witnessed ere that glad day arrives."

"I share that apprehension."

"Would it were otherwise! But to mourn for what may chance, instead of resolutely dealing with what is, or must be, is folly. Be our sorrowful parting brief. Let me, however, offer you this small jewel, as a memorial of one who would fain be ever by your side; and who, whatever may be his melancholy lot, whether striving with angry seas, or engaged in murderous battle-fields, will still remember Elfrida; and crave to hear that she is happy herself, and a source of happiness to others." Pressing her hand to his lips, he placed in it the precious stone he had mentioned, enclosed in a small slip of parchment. After a fond expressive glance, Reuben hastily bade adieu.

Elfrida sighed deeply. Words had been uttered by Reuben of awful import. The ghastly images which too often were suggested by the language of the Archbishop occurred to her as it were in connection with the unearthly apparition on which Reuben had gazed. Anticipated crime, past guilt, and future woe, presented themselves in melancholy succession to her startled imagination. Striving to shake off dismal forebodings, she opened the folded scrap of parchment which she had received from Reuben. It contained verses which, in modern language, may thus be rendered:—

Could fond anxieties defend—
Bright native of a higher sphere!
Could admiration safety lend,
Elfrida would have nought to fear.
But since such hope I may not share,
Friendship, devoted zeal, and love,
Can but unite to ask, in prayer,
Divine protection from above.

As rivers to the ambient main,
Their ebbing waters daily free,
That wandering streamlets may again
Be one in their maternal sea;
So, doomed—unhappy!—now to part,
May the Great Being we adore
Grant, face to face, and heart to heart,
We may yet meet—to part no more!

As if to atone for the harshness of his late speech, the Archbishop was lavish of courteous acknowledgments of the service Reuben had desired to render. Offering kindly admonitions and thanks, he saw his young visitor depart with earnest expressions of paternal anxiety for his present comfort and eternal welfare; not unmingled with deep regret, for that, as he sadly anticipated, it would never be theirs to meet again.

"Child of my love," said he to Elfrida, having watched the retreating steps of the young De Moreville, "thy erring father repents him that for a moment he could doubt thy truth and prudence; which he deemed had made an unwise disclosure."

"It grieves me to know that I gave you pain."

"It was not thee—it was thy loved mother's features that revealed thy father's secret."

"Trust me, sir, Reuben did not solicit the revelation."

"I believe it. This same Reuben is no common youth. He met my frown, intended to appal, with manly courage. The unworthy taunt my rashness uttered he visited with a just, retaliating, not too-severe rebuke; and the proud Becket shrunk into littleness, confounded by a stripling's speech."

"Dare I then hope," said Elfrida, "his reasoning will prevail? that even yet you may be induced to remain in France? or pass to where you can avoid the wretched men who seek your life?"

"No, dearest. I cannot sink into obscurity, and grovel in the dust. For thy sake, were it possible, I would gladly embrace a cotter's life; but happiness and peace are not for me."

An imperfectly suppressed sigh told how deeply the daughter was affected. Becket proceeded. "For me let not that bosom beat. What were this transitory life, if, forgetful of duty, I could coldly abandon the sacred cause for which I have striven so long, and have so largely succeeded? It would be insupportable. If mine should be a martyr's fate, a martyr's glory also will be mine."

"But what, sir, what is glory where peace is not?"

"It is a refulgent gem which will, associated with my name, shine in the diadem of Church history, to enlighten mankind for ages, when this poor frame is mouldering in the dust. For thee, Elfrida—mark thy father's words—nor let vain dreams of mean terrestrial joys win thee from loftier aspirations."

"Alas, my feeble spirit is unequal to the eagle flights your hallowed lips would teach. Give me a respite from rude cares, and bid me look not for greatness but for repose."

"I wish it may be thine; but oh, my child, beware of love! I speak of wild, unreasoning passion; that burning fever which afflicts the young, and leads to sorrow. It is a traitor which betrays to shame, remorse, and death."

"Must that be ever so?"

"Too surely for those who hastily submit to its bondage. Be on your guard. Deem it the serpent that would fain invade the Eden of your mind."

"Then let me to a convent."

"That, when your mind has been duly prepared by the good canon, my earliest instructor and my latest friend, may be well. Doubt not my speech is the ripe fruit of sad experience, now offered to your hand without the cost of years of sorrow by which I purchased it. The joys of love, like the bright robes, gay assemblies, and luxurious feasts—the prizes held out to aspiring folly by a giddy world—soon pass away, no longer valued than are the toys of infancy. Not so the hopes which swell the mind chastened and elevated by holy reflection. They brighten as years pass away, and finally, when the body fails, not yielding to decay, but ripening for heaven, the purified spirit, bursting from the gloom of the charnel-house, enters on a brilliant immortality."

Elfrida listened with devout attention to the exhortation of the Archbishop; yet in the same moment her mind involuntarily turned to the prayer embodied in the parting gift of Reuben. If love had not gained admission to her heart, it lingered at the door. Yet, while love and admiration connected themselves with the name of young De Moreville, something inconceivably awful was associated with the recollection of what he told of the ghost or mysterious image he had looked upon. It did not abate the painful impression which had been made by the fearful omens and dismal visions of which her father had spoken.

Landing at Sandwich, accompanied by Robert of Merton, his friend and trusty servant, Herbert of Bosham, by Osbert, his chamberlain, and by Alexander, his cross-bearer, with a suitable train of domestics, he, without loss of time, commenced his progress to Canterbury. Anxious first to confront any danger that might threaten to impede, he led the way, having directed Robert to follow with Elfrida at a short distance. Such precautions for her present safety or for his own were unnecessary. Exulting crowds pressed forward to hail the arrival of the revered primate; flowers strewed his road; songs of triumph were chanted and loud hosannas shouted in gratitude to Heaven, for the restoration of one so dear to pious Christians.

The general satisfaction increased as he advanced; and tumultuous enthusiasm welcomed his entrance into Canterbury. Invited to a splendid banquet, the most gorgeous decorations which taste and liberality could supply, as well as the choicest viands set forth in profusion, rendered honour to the great event of the day. Among them, it may be mentioned, a silver-gilt drinking-cup, appeared, elaborately prepared for the occasion. The cover was surmounted by a figure of St. George vanquishing the dragon, who was supposed, by the prelate's joyous admirers, to represent the king subdued by Becket. It was inscribed "*Ferare God*;" mitres and thistles with the initials, T. B., curiously wrought, encircled it, and to these was added the convivially hospitable command, *Vinum tuum Bibecum Gaudio*. Thus welcomed by the principal inhabitants of Canterbury, Becket considered that Tuesday consummated the victory its soldier had gained for the Church, and failed not to honour the wine-cup by freely drinking from it to the health and well-being of his friends in Canterbury; but withal taking care not to forget another pertinent hint which appeared on the vase "*Sobrie Estote*."*

He passed to the Cathedral; it was magnificently adorned with laurel wreaths and silken drapery. The pealing organ and loud-sounding trumpets gave forth notes of solemn joy; and harmonious voices sang the praises of the Eternal, to exalt the importance of his chosen minister. When the reverential demand, "Who is this King of Glory?" was heard, the choral response, "The Lord of Hosts, He is the King of Glory," was enthusiastically shouted; and all eyes turned to the Archbishop as if in him they recognised no unworthy ambassador of the Almighty Being he lived to serve. With what eager, breathless attention did that congregation listen to his sermon! His text was from Paul's epistle to the Hebrews:—"For here have we no continuing city: we seek one to come."

With no common eloquence he dwelt on the evanescent character of worldly grandeur, insisting on the all-surpassing necessity of looking to that city which was "to come," and which would continue eternally. He touched on the importance of good conversation, of submission to authority in the Church, and peculiar emphasis he gave to the words of One who had said, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee," and, with commanding animation, he went on as speaking in his own person—"The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me."

The sentiment of the speaker seemed to wake an echo in the hearts of his admiring hearers. The effect was all that the vanity of a preacher or the piety of a saint could desire to witness.

* A pictorial representation of the cup here described appears in the Antiquarian Repertory.

Withdrawing from the congratulations which poured in upon him till a late hour, alone with Elfrida, he cheerfully demanded, "Was I not right? Said I not this braggart De Broc dared not stand before me? Is not this a triumph for the Church and for the bishop?"

"It is; it is indeed, sir," the daughter exultingly repeated. "Would that Reuben de Moreville could be here to witness it, to share my happiness! How would he rejoice!"

The Archbishop looked thoughtfully at her. He replied, "Why, that might be well; but—but, girl, remember what I said, beware of love!"

Not yet had his labours for the Church reached their termination. His piety did not save him from being resentful, or rather he believed it to be a duty to revenge an affront offered to Heaven, which he almost invariably recognised in what offended his dignity as Archbishop of Canterbury. Having enlarged on the importance to all believers of remembering it was for them to forgive injuries, he despatched messengers to Dover, where the Archbishop of York and the Bishops of London and Salisbury then were, to serve those prelates with letters of excommunication, which, while at Rome, he had obtained from Pope Alexander III., to requite them for crowning the son of the reigning monarch, in obedience to that monarch's command, while their primate was away. He was eager to make them know that the persecuted dignitary, as he considered himself, and whom they had regarded as a lost exile, was again in England, and more powerful than ever.

This decisive step taken, his mind was at rest. Recalling the exciting scenes of the last four-and-twenty hours, he felt this Tuesday might be marked in his diary as a great day for him, for the Church, and even for Christianity itself.

MANOR MELLERAY

CHAPTER XXII.

EDITH !

SHE turned pale first, and then a deep blush—a painful, overwhelming blush clouded her face—the red blood rising to her forehead, and dying her neck and ears to a rich crimson. And his eyes remained fixed upon her face. It seemed as if he had not the power to draw them away. She knew it. She knew that he was looking at her intently, struck dumb by the unexpectedness of the meeting, and the knowledge increased her confusion. Her own sensations bewildered her. After those long years to find herself in his presence once more ! A wild joy was thrilling her, and she was fighting against it, and she could not look up at him. A world of emotion was stirring within her—long-restrained feelings surging in her heart. The man whom she loved before all the world was standing before her, and she was ready to sink down at his feet, clasp his knees, and pour out her soul to him. But through all the wild, mad longing to do some such act, was the consciousness of the bridgeless, fathomless gulf that lay between them ; and of the irreparable wrong that lay in every additional moment she should pass in his presence.

She must go away from him ; the sooner the better. She must not give way to those mad wishes ; she must not listen to him. With all her strength she fought against her blushes and her confusion ; but her colour kept coming and going, and she still stood silent before him, incapable of speech. Several minutes passed with this expressive silence between the two ; he standing mute as if struck into a statue, she downcast-eyed, embarrassed, shrinking into herself. Then his voice sounded slightly different from those first words ; she had not noticed it, but they were very stern. Now they were different—milder. Her embarrassment softened him in spite of himself. She was not altogether a depraved, shameless creature, he could see with the first glance. And then she was so like what he remembered her. —There was little or no change. It was her own self—his wife—her own beautiful self. There was no change in that cruelly fair face, except an added dignity and pathos which bewildered him. And her presence alone was such a surprise. Although he had spoken sternly, he was less angry than amazed. Pure astonishment filled him. That she, of all women in the world, should be standing before him in his own house, in one of the very rooms he had destined for his daughter ; her daughter too ! It was almost incredible. And the wonder of it was that he



should be struck dumb, and could find no voice to curse her—the woman who had blighted his life. No ; her face, her air, her evident agitation disarmed him. Whatever she did once, she was not one to be cursed now ; at least his voice refused to be the vehicle of such language. He knew he ought to take his eyes off her face, and ask her what business had she there. Where was his calm self-possession that he could not summon his voice to bid this wicked woman leave his presence. But she was as much surprised as he, that was plain ; and her confusion spoke powerfully for her. ‘ If she had intended it she could not have conveyed into her face a more telling expression than that overpowering embarrassment against which she was fighting with all her might. It told that she was not altogether dead to shame or—to him. Ah, perhaps there was the secret of it. Was there a subtle appeal in those blushes to some vulnerable corner in his iron heart, which all his inflexibility could not resist ? He told himself over and over again afterwards, that it was simple astonishment had kept him silent ; but yet we may believe that he was softened—ever so little. She was in his house, and she was poor. Misfortune had overtaken her, and he would be merciful to her. And so he said in those changed tones.

“ You—a—you did not know that—under this new title, I suppose—who it was, eh ? ”

“ I did not know who Lord Cheney’s was. Had I known that, I should not, of course, have been here.” She was speaking with tolerable calmness, but her voice was very low and faint. “ Your housekeeper has been very good to me.”

“ It was you, then, she spoke of.”

“ Yes ; I am the poor sempstress,” and she raised her eyes to his face for one moment, but let them drop immediately again.

He was looking intently at her still, and it was not anger in his gaze, nor did she expect it. If he had shown his anger she would perhaps have been a little surprised. She did not know his thoughts any more than he knew hers. She had reasons of her own for thinking that he believed her innocent ; whilst he, on his part, believed her guilty, but had relented slightly towards her. He could not suppress an inordinate pity for the poor outcast who had once been his wife : who would be Lady Cheney’s now if she had had a proper regard for herself. And then to hear her calling herself the poor sempstress was not pleasant to him. He knew it was foolish, but he could not help feeling so. And he did not allow his anger to appear, and she was misled. If he had shown an indignant truculent front she would have spoken the words to clear herself which all my readers know before this she could have spoken ; and—well things would have been different.

“ I am sorry that you are in a bad way,” said he briefly, as if

endeavouring not to appear kind, but the words sounded kind to her, nevertheless,

"Yes, very poor; but I do not mind that so much now. I am used to it. Other things are worse. I mean harder to bear than poverty. But that is no matter, I am very well contented now, when I can get work to do. Mrs. Carnegie has given me work but—of course that must end now."

"Yes, of course—to end now," he repeated after her, in an abstracted way, and for the first time allowing his eyes to drift from her face to the window. Whether it was that she felt that his gaze was removed from her, or not, she looked up quickly, and scanned his face wistfully; but then she remembered that this was not right; that all her thoughts and feelings about him were wrong, and she hastily moved a few steps forward, resolving to leave him; if she stayed much longer she might not be able to keep a proper guard over herself; and seeing that he was cool and composed, after that first amazement had passed away, her pride was roused, for she gave an interpretation to his manner very far away from the right one. Then he turned; she had unavoidably come nearer to him; she was about to pass him. She murmured in a low, soft voice—(how sweet it sounded, recalling that past time so forcibly to him!):

"I will leave you now, my lord—it was unexpected; and so—and so—it is best that I should go away at once. I hope you may be happy."

"Stay!" said he, in a voice that was almost soft—in a voice that was, at least, neither harsh nor stern—"I should like to know all about it; how it is, I mean, that you are so poor, and—and—of course I must help you. I never could know or find out where you were, although I made inquiries; and now that you are poor, it is, of course, doubly imperative on me. An allowance, you know; and I am very sorry it has not been done long ago."

"Oh, no! I could not think of it! I am poor of my own choice; I could be better off, if I liked; and now I am used to work. Pray do not ask me to consent to this; *it must not be!*"

"But, indeed, you must allow me. And what do you mean by being poor of your own choice?" he asked, looking at her with an unwilling sort of interest.

"I cannot explain—it would take too long; and, indeed, I must not stay here longer," she replied, with a nervous agitation, looking everywhere but up into his face. "Farewell, Lord Cheney! Our paths lie separate, and—and—oh, do not speak of that again! You have no right to concern yourself about me, and I have no claim upon you; that was all over sixteen years ago, and our ways are separate. May God bless you!"

And then, for a moment, she clasped her hands—those lily-

white hands, which in that moment he remarked, as well as the passionate fervour of her face; and her words thrilled him with a long unknown delight, which, the instant he experienced, he fought against fiercely. But long-suppressed feelings were surging strangely within him, he was no longer master of himself, and all his old rigour departed from him. But, by a great effort, he restrained the desire to speak her name, the longing to ask her why she left him, or how things had gone with her since; for he guessed that she had suffered much by the deep sadness in her eyes, and the plaintive wail that rang through her voice; and his sternness melted away before that brief, passionate prayer, so strongly reminiscent of her first girlish ardour, as mists yield to the morning sun. He wondered at those strange sensations, not felt for that same number of years she had mentioned, and he said to himself it was the old charm, the old spell was coming over him. He had loved her so very much! And now, after that irretrievable wrong, and after those sixteen years, the sweetness and joys of the honeymoon year were brought back vividly by her voice and her look; and the rigid disciplinarian felt his iron heart melting within him.

But this would not do: the false syren must be repelled! She was near regaining something of her old sway, and he had sworn that should never be; nay, he had sworn he would never look on her face again; and here he was, gazing at the sinning woman he had once called wife with something not far from admiration. He would make a provision for her, and never see her again. And a thought came to harden him in his resolution.

"There was a soldier in my hall, one day," he said, his face darkening a little—"a mere boy. He reminded me of some one I could not remember then, but now I know it was of you. Your son, perhaps?"

"Yes," said she, in a very low voice.

"What name?"

She hesitated for a moment, then said—

"Ralph Sandringham!"

"*Ralph!*"

"Yes."

The words were nothing; but he was looking at her, and for a moment she raised her eyes to meet his, and those exchanged glances meant, "Did you name him after me?" And the response, "I did!" He seemed some way moved, and a little puzzled, too; then, hastily—

"You do not mean that——," but checked himself, and drew himself up stiffly, and asked, with an affectation of indifference, "Was it in consequence of your poverty that he became a soldier?"

"Not exactly. We *were* poor before that; but he would not have left me, for he was earning money—a little weekly in a merchant's house—and—and—he was a great comfort to me; but I parted from him—" (She paused for a few minutes, and he waited in silence. In spite of his resolution he was a good deal interested.) "I parted from him because I wanted to save him from—a danger I feared for him—and which he would encounter if he remained with me. And then he enlisted. It cannot be helped now, and he likes the profession."

"Does he like it?"

"Yes; very much." And she smiled softly,—a brief, quickly-vanishing smile, which, however, lit up her face with a radiance, a transient sunshine that made her still more like the shy, lovely girl he had called his bride; and she finished the sentence for herself: "Because he has a soldier's blood in his veins," smiling inwardly still.

"Would you wish that he were otherwise?"

"Oh, no! when he likes it."

"But you must have missed his help?"

"Not much. It is easy to live—easy to support life—when one has no—"

"What would you say?"

"Nothing; it is not worth speaking of!"

"I am afraid you have not been very happy."

"Happy!"

But it was in no melodramatic tone she repeated the word. She smiled again; in fact, a [dreary, piteous sort of smile, however, very different from the soft, half-subdued sunniness of the former. And the unwelcome softness came over him again—(where was all his stern, military rigour, that it could not help him in this moment of temptation)—and he drew a few steps nearer to her), and she met his fixed, earnest, questioning gaze, and grew embarrassed again.

"Edith," said he, in a low tone that was not without emotion, and the mention of her name thrilled her through.

"Oh! for pity's sake, do not speak to me!" she burst out, with pale face, and streaming eyes, and clasped hands stretched towards him. "I cannot—I must not listen to you. Oh! have pity on me!—you cannot know—but it is useless. Alas! why did I meet you? What shall I do now—now? Even this: I should not speak in this way—I should forget—we both should forget—everything. It is all past, and we must never meet again."

She was still speaking when there was a step in the outer room, and the next moment Mrs. Carnegie appeared.

"I declare, Mrs. San——" she was beginning, when she perceived the strange position of the two occupants. Standing so close, she with outstretched hands, he listening intently evidently. She was the first to recover herself, withdrawing her hands, and gliding backwards almost imperceptibly, so that the housekeeper, with the second glance, thought her eyes must have deceived her, and that they were not so near each other, after all, for she was facing him still, as if she had only then stopped speaking to him. But she was considerably surprised, and stood silently looking from one to the other.

Lord Cheney's bowed, their eyes meeting for an instant with a sort of understanding, which neither quite grasped at the moment, but comprehended afterwards, and then he left the room. She went back hastily to where her work was, keeping her face well averted from the housekeeper's sharp eyes.

"Law! such a surprise as I got!" said Mrs. Carnegie, coming up to her, "to see you talking to my lord, and in such a free way it seemed. I never knew that you knew him. Did you know him? and how was it? I thought you said you never saw him before."

"I mistook the name," she replied, stooping over the silk, and folding it carefully. "I *did* see Lord Cheney's before."

"Perhaps you were in his service out there in India? You told me you were there once," said Mrs. Carnegie, with great curiosity.

"In his service?—yes, in his service," and she was still busy with the silk. "It was in that way, but not for long. And now I think I shall go, Mrs. Carnegie. You remember you said you could spare me for the evening, and I think Ralph may call soon at Mrs. Caper's."

"But what could you have to say to him—to my lord, I mean—if it's no harm to ask? He seemed to be listening wonderfully, and I am sure I never thought you knew him, or that he'd let such as you speak to him like that. It seemed quite free. What could it have been about, if it's no harm to ask?"

"Oh! no, of course not; and it was only about a poor soldier in whom his lordship took an interest. You do not know him, and you would not care to hear of him, I suppose; but Lord Cheney's asked me some questions about him, and, of course, I should answer them. And, indeed, I should never think of being free with his lordship; that is such a mistake of yours."

"Well, at all events, I thought you were; but I suppose it was on my eyes. He must think an awful deal about that poor soldier, at any rate. It seemed to be an affair of life or death with him," at this her listener turned away hastily, but then the housekeeper saw that it was to pick up a piece of gold-and-green braid

that had fallen near the window, "and I really thought you were crying. Your face looks uncommonly like it even now, but I suppose that is on my eyes too." She was speaking a little crossly, for she was not well-pleased with the half-confidence which had been accorded to her.

"It would not be very wonderful," said Mrs. Sandringham, gently, "as it was of a near relative I was speaking."

"Were you asking him to do anything for him?"

"No."

"And did you say anything about me?" and now Mrs. Carnegie scanned her face closely.

"I did. I told him that you had given me work, and had been very good to me; and Lord Cheney's was pleased at that. He would be pleased, no doubt, to hear that you had been kind to anybody—the greatest stranger—for it seems to be his nature. And now, I think, we will not say any more about this, Mrs. Carnegie," she added, with some dignity, and placing the pieces of silk, neatly folded, in her hand, thus virtually giving up her employment, but the housekeeper did not know that.

She was inclined to indulge her curiosity a little further, and was somewhat indignant at finding herself quietly, almost imperceptibly repelled. But there was no mystery made of what had passed between Lord Cheney's and the needlewoman. She gave it as commonplace a colouring as was possible, and without telling any more than what has been related, she left on the housekeeper's mind the impression that it was an accidental—as it was, in fact—and quite unimportant meeting; nothing more than a chance *rencontre* between a gentleman and one who had met him in India, and who could give him information concerning a soldier in whom he had taken an interest; so that the incident was soon forgotten by her, and Mrs. Sandringham was allowed to take her leave in peace.

But the following day, when a letter was received announcing that she could no longer come to Belgrave-square for work, and thanking Mrs. Carnegie for her goodwill and material assistance, the latter, after a little whiff of indignation at being treated to such scant information, and so summarily thrown over, in fact, began to wonder what could be the meaning of it, and after a good deal of dubitation on the subject, at last arrived at the conclusion that Lord Cheney's had recognised some notorious character in the meek-faced Mrs. Sandringham, and had forbidden her to enter his house again.

"To think of it," said Mrs. Carnegie, aghast at her own close acquaintance with the delinquent, and her escape from contamination, "it's enough to make one never believe in a fellow-creature again. So high and grand-looking, as if she couldn't commit a sin,

and, my dear, so consequential ! I thought it was all because she was so respectable, and had been in trouble. I little knew what she was ; but I know now. It's as clear as the daylight. I knew she was crying, and her hands stretched out in such a way ; she was asking him not to make it known on her. That's it, I'll wager anything I suppose he was saying he would, and she didn't get time to get the promise from him ; for I came in, and didn't she look scared ? I knew her, with all her acting, and how quick she went away to the window !—to hide her face, no doubt. And now she's afraid to come here. She doesn't know what he will do, and she's afraid of him. Wasn't it well my lord knew her ? Well, wait till I see Peter ! To bring such a person to me ! Of course I can get no blame. I didn't know what sort she was, and I'll tell my lord so if he asks me. But wait till I catch Peter ! The great stupid ! to go recommending people he doesn't know anything about. And, indeed, if I only saw her, I'd give her a piece of my mind for imposing on me in such a way ; but she won't show here again, I'll go bail. I wonder he'd bow to her, like that ; it's too good for the likes of her."

In the meantime, Mrs. Sandringham reached her humble lodging, laid aside her things, and sat herself down in a chair, a strangely wistful expression in her beautiful face.

She was bewildered and almost stupified by this unexpected meeting, as she had not believed it possible that she should ever encounter Colonel Dormer again. He was stationed in India, and she was a wanderer on the earth with no fixed abiding-place, with no bread-winner, no income, no home—a poor struggling needle-woman whose lowly path might never be expected to come in contact with his. How could she foresee that he would be ennobled by a grateful country, and that he would return to take a well-deserved place amongst the magnates of the land into which fate had led her weary steps, and more wonderful still, that she should be led on by arbitrary chance (if, indeed, it was chance had done it) into the very house he had chosen for himself out of this wilderness of houses, any one of which might have been her working-place as well as it was. She had cause to regret their meeting for more reasons than one, but chiefly for the effect it was likely to have upon herself. There had been room to hope that she might learn to forget him and all that far past with which he was connected, but now, judging by her own sensations, she found that this was not by any means so feasible as she had imagined. He still had considerable influence over her, and she found only too much consolation in thinking of the time when she had believed that he had a right to her thoughts and her love, and that no deep gulf of estrangement like that which had since intervened could

ever separate them. "How much easier it is," she thought to herself, "to yield to a temptation, than to be strong and resist it! If I had yielded then—if I had closed my eyes upon the cruel fact, doing as my heart prompted—it would have been so different with me, and perhaps it would not have been so very wrong after all, for there was never any woman so hardly tried. But it was not so much my conscience even then as fear for *him*, knowing that what Trefanin threatened he would surely do; deeds of violence were quite in his way. It was always thus that he ruled me—by threatening those I loved, one after another—my father, my husband, as I then deemed him to be, my children. He has been my evil genius. They say that every one has an evil spirit and a good spirit attending them. I wonder was my evil spirit given to me in a visible shape? But indeed it is folly to be raving against him now, or to be yielding to those thoughts at all. If I could only get out of myself—if I could exchange identities with some other poor woman, who has no tragical, unfortunate past to distract her mind with, I should be happy, for I believe that even unconsciousness would be preferable to such a state of feeling as this is."

But such an exchange was scarcely feasible, and, during the rest of this day, she found it impossible to withdraw her thoughts from this unlooked-for meeting, which, amongst other things, would have the effect of throwing her out of employment, as she must not go to that house again. Lord Cheneys was now as far removed from her morally, as he would be in person, were he stationed in one of those bright mysterious planets, which astronomers tell us are worlds like our own, but which we, in our childish dreamings, were wont to consider angels' eyes, that watched tenderly over us during the unguarded hours of the night, and not to be withdrawn until all the poor, erring inhabitants of earth would be gathered into their Father's house. He must be a stranger to her henceforth, and as it was necessary she should try to preserve her peace of mind, or rather, as that was scarcely in existence, to acquire some tranquillity of feeling resembling it, she would carefully avoid everything which could throw her into the confusion and agitation she had experienced a short time since; and, as a preliminary step, she wrote that letter to the testy housekeeper, thereby abandoning the only prospect of help, which, for the present moment, presented itself, and with a weary hopelessness prepared to face the inexorable world once more. What a hard lot it all was, and would patience be left to her through the whole of its trying ordeal? Nothing but work henceforth, until the delicate white fingers would stiffen themselves into eternal quiet, and the weary heart also rest from its painful labours in grateful death. But, meanwhile, the work was inevitable, and she must hold bravely on, waiting for the will of Heaven. And

cruelly difficult as it all was, she rose up patiently, almost courageously; so long as she was conscious of having a will of her own she would use it in the right way, that is, by willing patient labour, since such was ordained for her.

A few days after that, Ralph came to her a-glow with the news he had.

"Fancy, mother, Lord Cheneys spoke to me to-day again! He came to our quarters with Colonel Dagonair, and the colonel looked awfully proud of his regiment. They are such a fine lot of fellows, mother, the finest you ever saw!"

"And what did Lord Cheneys say, Ralph?" she asked quietly.

"O, such a lot! if I can think of it all. He told Lieutenant Horne to send up that little drummer-boy to him—meaning me. It was in the colonel's room, and he was there alone. I almost thought on purpose, for the colonel went out just as I came in, but that might have been by chance. But he asked me such a lot of questions. Only for the sort of questions they were, I would have thought I had done something, and was going to be tried by court-martial. Although, to be sure, there'd be more in it than him in that case.

"And what were the questions?" said she, with the faintest touch of impatience.

"What was my name first, and I told him, Ralph Sandringham; and he said, 'Yes: Ralph, I know;' and then if I didn't stare at him to hear him calling me Ralph, as if he had known me all my life. (But she knew that it was not in that way he had spoken the name, but merely repeating it, as one does a word which has much significance to oneself.) And the next thing he asked was, where was I born, and I said I didn't know. You remember you never told me; and when he asked that, it seemed so strange my not knowing. I never thought of it before; and I am sure I looked awfully stupid when I had to say I didn't know. But he didn't seem to mind it much, but said, 'in England, perhaps;' and I said I thought not, as I had lived on the Continent as long as I could remember, until the last few years. And when he asked me in what country, I said sometimes in Italy, sometimes in Germany, and sometimes in France. But I couldn't cease thinking of my not knowing where I was born, and I said I'd ask you when I'd go home."

"In India, darling," she replied, softly; "and it is just as well you did not know."

"Why, mother?"

"O, because—no matter," said she, slightly confused. "Did Lord Cheneys say any more?"

"Indeed he did; but to think of my being born in India so far away, and I not to know it! I am not an Indian, then, I hope," said he with a short laugh, "or a Hindoo. I'd rather be anything but that. And Lord Cheney's was there, too. It's a very hot country, mother, isn't it?"

"Yes, dear," she replied, forcing herself to be patient.

"I wonder I don't remember; but I suppose I couldn't. I must have been very small—was I mother? And it's very unhealthy, too, they say. Lord Cheney's was getting into bad health I believe, but not very bad, and so he came home; but he was in some great post out there, and the Government don't know what to do with him. They think so much about him. It's something to be great like that. He asked me should I be glad of promotion. You may guess I said I would; and he told me to be good, and to do my duty, and that I would get on very well. And he asked me a lot about my mother. Fancy! as if you had been a friend of his. How you had been working since you came to London; and had I helped you much; and then when I saw he liked to hear of it, I told him everything."

"Everything, Ralph! How, everything?"

"Oh, you see, I couldn't help it; he was so kind and nice, and listened so willingly. You'd tell him yourself, mother, if you were there; and just think—he stopped me in the middle and said, "Do you think your mother would object to your telling this?" and then I thought, and I knew that you wouldn't mother—telling it to him you know; and so I went on, for I saw that he liked to hear it. I wonder, does he ask every soldier these things; and if he does how can he remember all he hears. But I asked Stokes, and he told me he hadn't questioned *him*, at all events; but that, perhaps, he might yet, and that it might be a way he had got out there in India with those native soldiers, you know—they are such queer fellows."

"Yes, yes!" said his mother hurriedly; "and what next?"

"I told him everything then, you know how—about my father—I hope, mother, it wasn't wrong. I didn't think then."

"No, dear; go on!"

"How you had left Homberg because you weren't pleased with the way he had been going on; that you thought it would be bad for me—his example, you know; but I didn't say what he had been doing. Of course, I wouldn't tell that; and how you came to England, and how poor we were; and how long it was before I got anything to do. And if you were to see his face, mother, when I was telling him all that you suffered, and how patiently you bore everything when you could have been so well off in that other place, you'd really think he was feeling as much as if he had been something to you—and he so stiff and stern-like. Whateve th

may say, I'll never believe that Lord Cheney's is hard or strict. He looked then as if he could shed tears, if he were a woman. How kind of him! Wasn't it, mother?"

"Yes, darling, very kind;" and then she buried her face in her hands for one minute; and Ralph, waiting silently, wondered was she vexed at his having told all this, or was she thinking of something else; but when she looked up again he saw that her face was very pale, and he exclaimed impulsively—

"There, mother! I won't tell you any more. I oughtn't to have been bringing all these things back to your mind, when you should be trying to forget them, and I should be helping you."

"But I like to hear this, and I want you to tell me everything he said—everything Lord Cheney's said, Ralph. We have so few friends. I love to hear of any kind words that may be spoken to you."

"Well, there's not much more, at any rate. I suppose I may as well finish it. I told him everything, mother, that I could think of. I'm glad you're not vexed at that: and he said I was a good boy to be so fond of you—that it was a good trait in me, and that I ought to love you very much, as you had my welfare so much at heart. And then he said—such a strange thing!—"Tell your mother all that you have been telling me, and that I questioned you; and that I should not have done so, or allowed you to speak of these things, without an object. That object she will know herself.' I couldn't remember the words so well if he hadn't repeated them. He wanted me to remember them. Wasn't it strange, mother, and so kind of him to take an interest in a poor drummer-boy like me? I wish he saw you, mother. I think he'd say you oughtn't to be the mother of a poor drummer-boy like me, but the wife of some great officer like himself."

CHAPTER XXIII.

PALLIDA MORS.

LADY ELIZABETH had another of those dreadful attacks after Christmas, and did not rally out of it as well as usual. And when she did get better, it could be easily seen that it was only for a short time, but she was brighter and more cheerful than she had been for a long time. But her eyes would often rest on Evelyn in a very pensive way. The hour was drawing near; she knew it, and nothing could be done for her pet but to leave her to her guardian's care. That would be a tender care she knew; perhaps it would be well if it might be less so. But she had said she would trust her to him, and in her heart she felt that she might, thoroughly. She

would be safe in the sanctify with which his own high honour would envelope her, and she would be secured from all rough hits by his tender watchfulness; but, at the same time, and whilst having all confidence in her son's honour, Lady Elizabeth knew that various circumstances would make their future position one of trial and of danger to both. But there was no other feasible arrangement. Evelyn must reside in her guardian's house until she married, as it seemed her father had so completely thrown her off, as to be no longer conscious of her existence; and she could only hope that things would turn out well, and that she would soon marry, and be released from whatever unpleasantness she would know at Challis Haugh. Still an unconquerable anxiety disturbed the few last days of the invalid's life. She was perfectly conscious at this time, and gave a good deal of thought to this matter, until the final stroke came, and her eyes would follow the young girl about with a tender, wistful expression, or an anxious pondering look, as if striving to lift the veil of futurity, and learn that happiness and peace were to be her lot. Perhaps some light was vouchsafed to her, for at length a contented, almost happy expression settled down on the pallid but still beautiful face, beautiful with the serene effulgence of the saintly spirit that animated it. Alas, how soon to desert the earth for ever.

One morning she was seized with dreadful spasms, which continued during all that day and night, and ceased the next morning at the very same hour at which they had begun. And then she remained insensible for a couple of days; and after that she grew better, recovered her voice, and knew those about her. But she was excessively weak. She could eat nothing, and slept the greater part of the day as well as the night; and when it was deemed advisable to administer some nourishment to her, it was more than once necessary to rouse her out of that long heavy sleep, which Evelyn had at first welcomed as a good sign, until she learned that it was not any such thing. She never left her side. Pale, still, and watchful, she sat there, all day and even at night, as if she were a guardian angel waiting to carry her soul to heaven. The instant she saw her open her eyes, and her lips begin to move, she would hasten to catch the faintest syllable, hoping it might be the expression of some wish, or a loving whisper, as was often the case. She would moisten her lips, and settle the pillows, and whisper some tender, unnecessary question, in the hope of hearing her speak; for the doctor had said that would not be any harm to her. Mrs. Hart and Rachel were continually with her, and would urge her to go out for awhile, but it was useless. She slept in the adjoining room, for she could not bear to go any distance from her beloved friend, or to cease for any length of time in her loving

watch over her. The other house-servants and Harris and the grooms would be continually inquiring for Lady Elizabeth; for it was well-known that she was dangerously ill, and there she was so much beloved. There was a gloom over the whole house; everybody spoke in whispers. Nothing could be heard but the coming and going of the doctors, and their low spoken talk when closetted together. And in the midst of this, news came that Letitia's young son was dead, and that she herself was coming to see her mother. The day the news arrived, Lady Elizabeth seemed better, and spoke more intelligibly than she had done since those frightful spasms (which happily had not returned) had attacked her.

"Do you feel better, darling!" whispered Evelyn, finding her eyes resting on her face, with a wistful, yearning look, as if she wanted to speak, as she did presently.

"Yes," very low and faint, and then she paused, as if to collect her strength. "Yes, better, much better. I shall soon be quite well, my love."

"Thank God," murmured Evelyn, in a heartfelt thanksgiving; but then the expression, new and prophetic, which she read in her eyes, warned her that this "quite well" had something of an awful meaning—a meaning full of high promise and inexpressible joy, and sweet hope to the gentle invalid, but fraught with bitter sorrow to her. But she cast the thought from her, it would be too dreadful. She had been all along fighting against the belief, which seemed to be gaining ground with every one, and she was not yet prepared to force herself into submission. She *could* not say "Thy will be done." With Nathan, she thought it too hard that her only treasure should be taken from her. And so she rebelliously closed her heart against the belief, and with some impiety, declared to herself that "she would not believe it. It was impossible."

"Thank God," she repeated hastily, and with a certain defiance, as if by the words she would express this. "Oh, yes, mother, you will soon be quite well surely, *surely*; don't you think so yourself. Don't you really think so, for indeed, you may. The doctor said this morning that you were something better, and that your sleep was more natural. Think of that, and you know *he* knows—he wouldn't say so if he didn't, and he said he hoped you would be able to take more nourishment to-day, and I have got something nice that you like. Shall I bring it now?"

"Stay, darling. I don't care to take anything now—indeed, I couldn't," she added, in answer to Evelyn's pleading look; "perhaps by-and-bye; and I want to have some talk with you, whilst I am able. It may be the last——"

"Hush, hush! Oh, don't! I couldn't bear it. I couldn't listen to you. Oh, pray, don't say that again."

"My poor darling! There, there! don't look so. I cannot bear to fret you so, my love, but, indeed—you must be prepared. I may not be able to speak again, and I have something to say to you—something to say to you alone, and then you must call Arthur. Try to bear it, darling. We must part some time or other, and God's time is the best. And now you will let me say——"

"Ah, don't! I couldn't, I couldn't! It's too bad——" She was standing, her eyes bright, with an almost fierce light, her little hands clenched, and trembling with grief and passion. "I say it's too bad. What shall I do? Why couldn't——Oh, oh, oh! it's too bad, but I'll not believe it."

"Evelyn," she uttered, in a low, almost solemn tone, that brought the poor distracted girl to her senses, and she fell on her knees, and burst into a passionate flood of tears.

"I know it's wrong, and that you don't like me to speak so, and I won't. But—but if you knew how hard it is. Oh, why couldn't God take some other, or let *me* die. I wish I might—I won't say it again. There, you see I am quiet, and I'll listen too; but don't say it will be the last time."

"No, darling, I won't; and I did not say it would be the last time, but that it *might*. No one could tell that but God. I am perfectly resigned to His adorable will; and, my own Lennie, you must be resigned too. Whatever He ordains, be assured it is for the best. And if it is His will to take me from you, I know and believe that He will have you in His holy keeping, and that no harm shall come to you."

"I hardly care whether harm comes to me or not," Evelyn burst out irrepressibly. "I hardly care what happens to me, if that is to be. Oh, why can't you believe that you will recover. The doctor said——"

"I know all that the doctor said, and it was merely because he pitied you, my poor child. It was mistaken pity. I think it wiser to open your eyes to the real case. Arthur knows, and everybody knows but you, and now you must learn the truth. I can speak of it without difficulty, except in so far as I regret to pain you. But it will come less bitterly from me than from any one else, and I know that you will listen, and not speak in that way. It would pain me more to think that you rebelled against the will of God, than even to part with you, my love; for there would be nothing but bitterness and sin in such rebellion. Thank God I am so well able to speak to-day. I must not let the opportunity pass. Now dry those cheeks, pale with watching. I know all your love, my precious darling, and it grieves me to the heart to pain you in this way. It is given to few to win such love, and indeed, you have been very dear to me, *dearer than my own children*. And I know in your

great love, that you will listen to, and remember what I am about to say."

"And did *he* know?" exclaimed Evelyn, forcing her mind from attending, for a wild sob rose to her lips, at that assurance "dearer than my own children," and she felt that if she listened to much more of this, she might scream aloud with agony; "did *he* know, and he never told me."

"No, he would not tell you—Arthur, you mean. We decided it was best it should come from me. He is very much grieved, poor fellow; but he is a man, and will bear it like a man, and all my anxiety is for you, for your future welfare. It is of that I am going to speak. Now sit here beside me, and don't look so miserable, my poor child. I want you to attend to me, and to remember, you *will* I know and think, darling, it is all for the best. It is God's will. Oh, nothing can be wrong which He wills and ordains. Now, are you prepared to listen. I want to give you some instruction as to your conduct when—*when I am gone*. There, there—oh, tears again. Lennie, Lennie! Oh, my poor child."

For some few minutes nothing very coherent was said. Evelyn was weeping passionately with her head on the invalid's bosom, and the latter was not slightly moved. At last, she was the first to recover composure, and after a little while she succeeded in restoring Evelyn to something like calmness. Then she spoke. For some days, lying there so quiet and mute in the bed, she had been projecting this counsel. It is not necessary, and, perhaps, would scarcely be meet to detail what she said, and to which the young girl listened with various emotions, striving to attend and to remember, for she knew that she wished her to remember; but distracted by this new and engrossing grief, only half-grasping the substance of what she heard. And the advice, sound and good as it was, agitated her too, and a faint wonder at certain things that were said, dawned on her mind, but faded away very quickly, for a graver and sadder subject was uppermost therein. Afterwards however, she remembered those things, and the mild surprise they had caused her; and every one of those "last words" of Lady Elizabeth were remembered, and acted upon too. It would seem as if her memory had treasured them without her own concurrence, for, poor child, she was well-nigh distraught with her first and most grievous sorrow; but her memory was faithful to her good friend, and kept alive her least words, so that they were not wasted, but brought forth fruit manifold. Afterwards, in long silent self-communings, she recalled this advice, and firmly resolved to act upon it, come what might. Very soon her resolution was to be put to the test.

In the meantime, whilst Lady Elizabeth was yet speaking, but the substance of what she desired to say had been said, her son

entered the room. Her face was not so pale as it had often been in health. Underlying the delicate, transparent skin, was a flush, caused, perhaps, by the constant sleep—if it *was* sleep; but whenever this flush went, she looked like a moulded wax figure; her dark eyes had sunk deeper, and had an extraordinary light in them during all this day, as if the last glimmer of the soul was shining out through them. All this he noticed as he entered, and he knew that the sands of her life were quickly dropping away, leaving nothing—eternal space into which she would soon take flight. The loving eyes were instantly turned to him with that wistful, almost heartrending expression. He had been with her more than once that morning, but yet he stooped to kiss her—perhaps to hide the rush of emotion which he knew was working in his face. As he did so, the flush deepened in hers. Her conversation had touched him, but had been of a nature that would scarcely permit its being repeated; and yet she looked at him, when at length he stood erect before her, with an eager, questioning expression, as if she longed to unburthen her mind to him, too, and to have no thought, not even the least secret from him, during those last moments they should spend together. And in spite of her better judgment, she might, perhaps, have repeated for him the advice she had just given to Evelyn, in order that all three might have the one understanding, but this was not to be. He held an open letter in his hand, and he began to speak about it at once, as if fearing any more personal conversation, in which he might find it hard to maintain his composure.

“It is from Letitia, and you will be sorry, I know—the little boy is dead. Hooping-cough, or some of the thousand and one complaints of children. She doesn’t say; but the father, it seems, is quite wild at the loss. Letitia takes it very well, as might be expected, and says she will come and see you.”

“She would need to be quick, then,” murmured his mother, with a hasty glance at Evelyn, who had drawn back a little, and leaned against the foot of the bed in an attitude singularly expressive of despondency, which struck both mother and son at the same time, but the former motioned with her hand for him not to heed it. “And so the child is dead; it is for the best, of course; and how foolish to fret for it! But who can blame him? It is only nature, and I daresay he had been very proud of its being a boy. But they will have others, and he ought to remember that He who took had given his child to him, and that He can give again. I am sure Letitia bears it well. She could bear almost anything—at least, without visible distress. I wish—” and then her eye rested on Evelyn again, and then turned to him, and he read its expression. He knew that Evelyn had been told, and that the news was

weighing heavily on her, and his mother's look said, "Help my darling."

"Evelyn, you must go out now, and take a walk. It is a long time since you did so, and you will kill yourself with this work. I will stay with my mother, and you can tell Mrs. Hart or Rachel to be at hand. Go now. *She* wishes it."

"For pity's sake, don't ask me. I cannot bear to leave her. Oh, if you knew what I overheard those doctors say this morning. I know *now* what they meant by what she has been saying; I didn't then, and so I didn't mind it. They said, "Three days, possibly not so much," in that quiet, matter-of-fact way. Could it be that they were talking of *that*? Oh, I hate them for it! But do you believe it? Can it be? Can they do nothing?"

"What is God's will must be," he replied, gravely. "Poor child, poor loving little heart," and he stroked her hair softly.

"You won't send me away?" she pleaded.

"No, stay at your self-appointed duty, and may you get the strength for it!"

They had moved a little away from the bedside, but now she returned, and took up her old post; and he, seeing that his mother was going to speak, stooped to listen. But a *change had come*; the beautiful mind which had only just now breathed forth wise and good maxims for her *protégè's* future guidance, was disturbed on its throne. As it had happened more than once before, a transient cloud lingered on her faculties; her thoughts wandered. What she wished took the shape of what *ought to be*; and the tongue spoke what was dearest to her heart, without being any longer restrained by judgment or memory. It was not that she raved or rambled, she only *forgot*. It was a brief desertion of the memory; and then sprang uppermost a wish long suppressed, and it found expression in words he little expected to hear. They could not have been more ill-timed.

"Take care of her, Arthur; take care of your little wife," and she glanced at Evelyn. He started, all the colour left his face as he looked round at her too. She covered her face with her hands.

"She is a delicate flower," continued the invalid, softly. "She must not get a blast of wind. I should die happy if I thought—if I thought—— Arthur, won't you take care of her? I bequeath her to you. She was my pet, my darling. I loved her. Oh, Arthur, how I did love my little Lennie! for was it not *He* that gave her to me? 'Yes,' He said. 'Be kind to the orphan,' and she *is* an orphan. And now I give her to you. From your father and your mother you have received your wife, and she will be a true wife to you. No one will ever make you happy but little Lennie."

He had sunk on his knees, and buried his face in the bed ; and she went on speaking, partly to herself—

“I used to think that he must not have her. I don't know why I used to think *that*. And I would try to separate them ; and only yesterday I saw him speaking to her, and I said, ‘Pity that they must not be husband and wife.’ I must have dreamt that, for now I know that there is nothing to come between them. It will all come right ; the shadows are melting away, and it will come right yet. Poor little Lennie will be sorry for me,” and her eyes rested lovingly on her ; “but you must remember what I told you—it is God's will. And Arthur, too, must remember. Comfort him, Evelyn !—comfort him, darling ! Let him find mother, and wife, and child in you. Why do you look so imploringly at me ? Ah ! I am not to speak of that, but, my own love, it is coming ; it is God's will—it is coming. I know that I have not long to live—a day or two, perhaps. Do you know what is telling me now ?—that look in your face, darling. It is a look I saw in a mother's face once when her little boy was brought home to her dead, killed by an accident. Ah ! those things are hard—very hard—but they come from God, and we must submit, and it will be made right hereafter. I am going to heaven, darling, where I will think of you and him. Is this my boy's head ?” and she laid her thin, white hand on his brown hair, for he was still prostrate beside her. “I remember him a little boy, Lennie, well ; and then a fine young fellow ; and when he became a soldier, and I saw him in his uniform, I said I *saw* he was like his father—soft brown curls, just the same silky brown hair ; it was lighter long ago, but it has got darker now. It will never grow light again until the silvering comes. But you did not get time, my darling—you did not get time to grow grey. God's will be done ! Arthur will never, never return—yet, God's will be done.”

Evelyn looked from one to the other, from the strong man kneeling to the dying Lady Elizabeth, and a wild cry rose to her lips ; but she kept it down. She knew the meaning of all this ; reason had staggered, but not entirely given way. It was no longer exactly her dear friend was speaking ; and she vowed inwardly to remember that precious, wise, womanly advice, and not allow herself to be influenced by those later remarks. Sweet as they had sounded, they still caused her a bitter pang ; for well she knew they would never have been spoken, if the soul she so revered still held complete sway over the poor, weak tongue, obedient to the heart only. And at the same time that she recognised this fact, she was filled with greater reverence than ever, for she knew now what wish had been nearest Lady Elizabeth's heart, and what an effort it must have cost her to strive for the attainment of the very contrary of that

wish; and this thought increased her love and grief, as may be supposed. When she saw that she was really asleep—and out of those heavy, fast sleeps it was not easy to wake her—she gently took the worn fingers out of the young man's hair, and laid her hand on the bed, and covered it. And then she bent to his ear, and whispered, "She is asleep now," and he stood up and left the room without speaking.

The sleep lasted during the whole afternoon. Various people—servants and doctors—glided into the room, and about it, and out again, and she still slept; and Evelyn, equally motionless, sat by her side, and took no notice of anybody. She could not be induced to relinquish her post to another; and so she was left in peace. And the brief winter's afternoon deepened into night, and a mellowed light was conveyed into the room, she heeded not how or by whom; and when one or two female figures glided about noiselessly, she stared at them as if wondering what they were doing, and as if she did not know they were the servants busied with some simple arrangement. It seemed to her such an incomprehensible thing that people could be occupied with other matters whilst so awful an event was looming over the house, and when she—oh! how could she ever believe it?—was about to lose the dearest friend she had on earth.

At last Lady Elizabeth woke, with a slight gasp, and almost immediately after Mrs. Hart came from the adjoining room, as she had heard the sound—but that was impossible—bearing some restorative in a porcelain cup.

"Take it, my lady; it's very nice, and the doctor said you were to get it when you woke. *Do*, my dear lady; it's only a little. We'll raise your head—there, now! Miss Evelyn, hold that napkin. Now—now we'll drink it; so nice!—wait till you see; and Miss Lennie wants you to drink it. Oh! very good!—isn't that grand? Rachel, you may bring more; my lady likes it very well. Ah! Miss Lennie, wouldn't she do anything for you! Only a little more is all we'll ask you to take—the doctor said just this much. Blessings on you, my sweet lady! there now, we won't bother you any more. And look at that foolish Rachel, with the tears in her eyes! Round there, Rachel—it's crying for joy, Miss Lennie, she is—my lady is so much better. Raise that pillow, just farther—that will do, Rachel. Now, my lady, is that nice? Are you comfortable?"

"Bessie!"

The name was spoken in a low, faint, almost inaudible tone, but Mrs. Hart jumped suddenly, her round, fat face a-glow with pleasure.

"It's twenty years since she called me that afore. Always 'Mrs. Hart,' for the captain didn't like any one in the house to be

called Bessie. It's a—what d'ye call it—a shortening of Elizabeth, and that was *her* name, and no one dare have it but her. And so she stuck to 'Mrs. Hart' ever since, because she knew he wished it. If he said I was to be called Nebuchadnezzar, she'd have called me Nebuchadnezzar to her dying day. Lord bless us! why did she say Bessie now?"

"Did you wish to say anything, darling?"

Evelyn was bending over the couch, scarcely heeding the good housekeeper's peroration, watching the invalid's face, over which she was surprised to see a faint smile stealing.

"Yes," and then she turned her head slightly, and looked at her and at the housekeeper; she had not moved it for several hours before. "Ah, Bessie, I heard it, and you must not be superstitious. It is a long time—a very long time." She was speaking with some effort, but low as the words were, they could hear them distinctly, for intense silence reigned in the room and through the house, although the great dog, Sultan, had stolen into the room, and was crouched at the foot of the bed, beside Rachel, who also lingered there, loth to lose a word that might fall from her beloved mistress's lips. "And do you remember what he said when he brought the little baby from India? You were present, I think?"

"Yes, my lady, and I heard what he said, too: it was—Eh, my lady, would you rather not?—very well. And, sure, I never forget anything, especially anything he said—any more than you would yourself. He was the noble, good gentleman. There never was his like, except it be in his son, blessings on him! Well I remember the night before he died—the captain, I mean. Poor Chloe cried, as the Irish would say, the whole night through, like any banshee. No, Rachel, you never heard the like of it. The next evening he died. Miss Linnie, there, was a little thing of ten, and looked like enough to die herself, too; and how he did love her! Often I saw him carrying her up to bed, and he'd put her into my arms, and tell me to make her snug for the night, my lady standing by smiling."

"And didn't Chloe die soon after?" asked Lady Elizabeth, in a tone so distinct, that they were all startled by it.

"Yes, my lady, in six months exactly. They said he pined to death. It was a great dog, Miss Lennie, as big as Sultan there, and he used to follow the master about everywhere. But, sure you ought to remember him."

"Yes I do," said Evelyn, cheered and roused by the sound of Lady Elizabeth's voice, so like old times, before she became so ill; "but he wasn't as nice a dog as Sultan. Poor old Sultan," and she patted the animal's glossy mane, for he had stolen to her, perhaps also attracted by the well-known voice.

"Did you hear him crying last night, miss?" asked Rachel, in a whisper.

"No."

"Oh, it was awful. You must have been asleep, Miss Linnie; but you were sitting there, and I thought you heard it, although he was so far off from this side of the house. I heard it quite plain. I hope my lady ——"

"Yes, Rachel, I did," said the invalid, in the same low, distinct tone, and Rachel started perceptibly. "Now, Mrs. Hart, what is that a sign of? You always had a grain of superstition in you," she added, with a soft smile.

"A sign of nothing at all, but that the dog wanted to cry, my lady," said the housekeeper, stoutly.

"And yet you said not to me, but to some one else, that when Chloe cried *then*—" she paused for a minute, and closed her eyes, but Evelyn saw her lips moving. "Why—why so silly!" escaped from them. "What difference can it make now? I never could think of his words, and what comfort they would have been, had I remembered them. It will be over soon; and then never, never more to part. And yet how I shrink from the thought of his death. Still, you said, Mrs. Hart, that it was a sign of his near death,—like the banshee, was it not? We all heard of that. it is the same thing, no doubt. The dog is the banshee, I suppose. Do not the Irish say it only follows some families, those of good blood, and that it is a female figure, all dressed in white. But I read a nicer story than that, another kind of banshee. It was in some book about Irish legends. No—it was the 'Archæological Transactions.' You know the book, Lennie. It was about one family that was always warned of the death of one of its members by a little bird striking itself against the window and killing itself, and in the morning it would be found dead. And then they would know that some one amongst them was going to die, and always believed it implicitly. And, moreover, it would prove to be the case. A pretty idea, Lennie! Better than Mrs. Hart's banshee, is it not? But poor Sultan looks mournful enough to enact the part. Poor old Sultan!"

He had his forepaws on the bed, looking earnestly in at her. By an effort she raised her hand, and stroked his shaggy head, the others looking on with tearful eyes, surprised at her long-continued speech, and unusual clearness—Mrs. Hart wofully surmising that it was only "a lightness before death." And so, indeed, it proved. After addressing a few kind words to her and Rachel, she gradually fell asleep, and slept almost without intermission the entire night. Evelyn, when it came near morning, was induced to lie down in the next room, and resign her post for a couple of hours to Rachel.

But she had scarcely slept an hour, when she started up with a faint cry, having dreamed that Lady Elizabeth was dead; and she hastily dressed and entered the sick room. But she was still sleeping a heavy stertorous sleep, her face flushed, and her lips parted, and there was something in the sound of her breathing which dismayed her; she could not tell why, except that, perhaps, it was because she never heard her breathing in that way before. Whilst she was still looking at her, Lady Elizabeth opened her eyes, and after a brief gaze, she moved her lips. Evelyn bent down and heard—

“Don’t forget, my own love; don’t forget, you know. I and Arthur. Won’t you remember, Lennie. Is that Rachel? poor Rachel! how sorry! But it’s all—all for the good——. God’s will, my love——. May His—His holy will be done. I am going—to Him; and Arthur—and you! Yes, yes! It will come right. May *His will be done*. And when——,” here followed some words she could not catch, “it is good—His will—Arthur—Lennie—may His will——”

They were the last words she ever spoke. Evelyn’s ear was bent close to her mother, and she heard a few more whisperings, but their meaning escaped her; and she still waited and listened, for she saw that her eyes were open, and that she seemed disposed to say more, but nothing more came. Rachel was crying with her head on the bed, down near the foot, and the invalid’s glance rested on her for a minute, and she smiled a tender, pitying smile. And then the eyelids fell, and she was once more asleep. This was about four o’clock, and that sleep lasted until the ensuing afternoon. They had to rouse her to administer some drink more than once, but she immediately sank into sleep again. All during that last night she slumbered on. It was coma, the doctors had said, when they came at daylight; and Evelyn wondered what did coma mean. Was it the avenue that led to death’s portal? Would she never waken out of that awful sleep? Oh, at least she must hear her speak once again. She must listen to the loved voice. She must once more meet the pathetic eyes, that never looked angrily on her. All the love, all the kindness of her who was dying, kept coming up in her mind during the silent hours of that last night. How happy they two had been together! and must it all be at an end? She recalled the fond, petting expressions, the lingering kiss, the pleasant talk, the freedom, the perfect communion of mind, the telling of each other’s thoughts, and the asking of each other’s opinions; the quick exchange of glance which told how well they understood each other. What a store of reminiscences that should have been suppressed, and not thought upon at such a time! But she could not banish them, and so her face was deluged

in tears, and the poor fainting spirit was almost crushed with her great sorrow. But she still watched. She must hear her speak only once again, and she would be contented. She would not believe it possible that she was never to hear Lady Elizabeth's voice any more. Surely a change would come, and she would arise out of that dreadful sleep, and surely—surely she was not going to leave her—her little pet as she had so often called her. And then came—as so often happens—regret for any—the least—neglect; and certainly it was very little she could reproach herself with on that head. But she regretted having ever left her even for an hour; she bemoaned all the words she had lost through inattention; all the caresses she had only half responded to, when possibly thinking of something else. Oh, if that last year could be gone over again, how she would value Lady Elizabeth's society! how she would covet every moment! how she would watch for every look and saying, and treasure them in her heart! And yet if such were permitted she could not have behaved towards her kind friend more pleasingly than she did, even though she little suspected how short time she was to have her; and in the midst of her regrets this thought came, and was some comfort. Not that she plumed herself on her goodness, but in this hour of bitter trial she remembered looks and sayings, which had told her that Lady Elizabeth was well pleased with her, and it was the only gleam of comfort she had. And yet, so inexplicable is the heart, that it increased her grief. If the union between them had been less close, its disruption would not be so cruelly hard now.

Lady Elizabeth died at six o'clock in the morning. With the opening of day her soul took its flight like a little child's, peaceably. So quietly had she departed that for some time they were not sure if she were really dead. But Evelyn, looking on her face, saw something there she had never seen before—the inevitable mysterious calm impress of death; and the whole sense of her loss rushed on her mind. She had only half guessed it before, and with a feeling as if the world were sinking away from under her feet, she fell forward on the bed, weariness and grief overpowering her at length. And then she was carried out of the room and placed on the little couch she had got settled for herself in the next chamber, where she might be near Lady Elizabeth; and here she remained until her own room, which had not been occupied for a long time, might be prepared for her. And when that was done she was taken there; for as Mrs. Hart said, she was going to be very ill. The long watching, the anxiety, the bitter grief, had their effect. She did not leave her room again until a fortnight had passed, and all was over.

SERMONS

LORD BACON in his day, complained of "the excessive magnifying of that which, though it be a principal institution, yet hath its limits, as all things else have." "As far as I see," he adds, "every man that presumeth to speak in chair is accounted a preacher." The well-known print labelled "Treacle and Brimstone," represents the spirit of our times, the division of the world of ardent sermon-hearers, between the honeyed softness which, dallied with "naked examples, conceited inferences, and forced allusions," and the fluency and fiery periods, interrupted only for the purpose of taking the refreshment of a pinch of snuff, to illustrate the truth of Burke's apothegm, that the first requisite to make a successful orator is self-possession. In the advertising columns of the "religious papers," we find good-natured authors, prolific of homilies, proffering their aid for base lucre, and even for the small consideration of a few postage-stamps, to any clerical brother in difficulties. MS. sermons may be bought below par, and their counterfeits in lithograph are to be obtained, to delude too curious eyes in the gallery. John Lewis, the vicar of Margate, foresaw their ingenious intention, and did his part to prevent its success; for he directed that the one thousand sermons which he left behind him in manuscript should be destroyed by his executors, in order that "no indolent clergyman might ever make use of them." Bishop Burnet and Bishop Bull, on the other hand, recommended their younger clergy to avail themselves of the labours of their predecessors. A noted popular preacher demolished his widely-spread reputation for eloquence in a certain watering-place, by venturing to address the hard-headed argumentative gentlemen of the long robe in one of our Inns of Court; and when a bencher mournfully complained that this preacher was feeble in the pulpit, while he eulogised his social qualities as a companion, he received this cold comfort from the diocesan, "Yes, yes, I understand: he is like your old port,—good in the bottle, but bad in the wood."

In old days, the people stood up and the preacher sat down. Now the preacher stands, and the people "sit under" him. In the congregation of Origen, his admirers took notes, with his permission, after he had reached the age of sixty; shorthand writers preserved many of the sermons of the golden-tongued John of Constantinople; and St. Gregory Nazianzen, in his farewell address, expressly bade adieu to the lovers of his sermons, and to "ye pens, both public and private." St. Cyril of Jerusalem, St. Athanasius, St. Augustine, and Gregory the Great, like Chrysostom and St.

Gregory, were all able contemporaneous preachers; the artificial divisions of modern discourse we owe to the teaching of scholastic writers. These fathers, however, complain of want of attendance, talking, inattention, and improper behaviour in their audience; while St. Chrysostom had to rebuke his enthusiastic admirers for their interruptions of loud applause, when any passage particularly pleased them. The early part of the eighteenth century presents a curious parallel instance. Spratt and Burnet, old rivals, preached on one occasion before the House of Commons; and, according to the demonstrative practice of the day, part of Burnet's congregation in St. Margaret's, Westminster, "hummed" so loudly and so long, that he sat down to enjoy it, and rubbed his face with his handkerchief; but Spratt being honoured in the same manner, stretched out his hand and cried, "Peace, peace! I pray you, peace!" A preacher of the same period, taught by past experience, actually prefaced his sermon before the University of Cambridge in St. Mary's, by the words, "*O, hum et hissimi auditores!*" At one of Massillon's splendid bursts of eloquence at St. Germain's, the whole congregation started to their feet.

Great is the variety of preachers. Hoadley had to preach "his periods of a mile" kneeling, owing to a strain which he received when an undergraduate. Heyden represented "the sleeping," and Dove the "weeping preacher;" the political, the polemical, the anecdotal, the scientific, the poetic, and the prosaic of the past, are not an extinct class in the present. Bolingbroke says that "Manton taught his youth to yawn," and John Wesley deplored the fact that in his youth he was always relieved when he heard the customary ascription to glory that marks the close of a sermon. We have been tempted ourselves to envy the immunity of the Greek Church, from the infliction of a dull and lengthy inroad on our patience, as related by the Marquis de Custine, "*les temples Grecs ne servent plus de toit à la chaise de la vérité. Les Grecs Muscovites retranchent la parole de leur culte.*" In the middle ages sermons seldom exceeded ten minutes in length, but until the time of William of Wykeham, the ecclesiastical Lord Chancellors invariably prefaced their opening speeches in Parliament with a text, the last instance of the practice occurred in 1445, when Bishop Stafford addressed the House of Lords. In the reigns of the Tudors and the Stuarts, the preachers were the chief instructors of the people, and combined amusing topics with improvement, arresting the idle auditor, and guiding his thoughts to consider the weightier matters on which he treated. The sermons then contained whole common-place books of antiquarian jottings, familiar anecdotes, and sketches of ordinary life, quaint discoveries of the naturalists, happy classical allusions, lively reminiscences of foreign travel, and valuable illustrations of the manners of the period.

They were plain homely sermons, such an one as was well described as "being nothing fine, but then one's conscience does not talk fine;" they were not the high-flown compositions, rhythmical in flow, and redundant in figures and tropes, which a captious inquirer doubted a meek old woman's power to comprehend, and received the withering reply, "Would I presume, blessed man!" Nor were they bad essays, of that dry-as-dust, hackneyed type, wordy and wearisome, which a friend heard another devout old lady eulogise in Westminster Abbey, "Ah, but it was a grand cathedral sermon." South touchingly relates of the Holderforth of his day, that "what with insufferable nonsense, and endless repetitions, the pulpit was always the emptiest thing in the church;" and he adds, "I never knew but their hearers had cause to begin a thanksgiving as soon as they had done." Mr. Holderforth, he further wittily describes, as one "whose chief intent is to vaunt his spiritual clack, and to pray prizes!" Bishop Lisle told Mr. Speaker Onslow, that Sharpe, Archbishop of York, would often say that the Bible and Shakspeare brought him to York, meaning that one formed his doctrine, and the other his style in the pulpit. This example, fortified by the preferment, may be recommended to preachers of the time, to the common advantage of them and ourselves.

The graduate of Oxford, under the degree of Doctors of Divinity, is permitted the privilege of "*in ocreis ambulandi*," although the Master of Arts receives licence, "*ad prædicandum evangelium*;" for the doctor, after the Reformation, was presumed always to be ready to mount his soberly trotting nag, and preach whenever and wherever his services were required.

In the middle ages sermons were either *postillated*, by explaining a portion of Scripture, sentence by sentence, or *declared*, by announcing the subject, but giving no text. In the Lutheran Church at Paris, the texts for the year were pasted upon a notice-board, so that the congregation made their choice. In London our modern improvement is, to announce the names of the preachers also. James II. when at Oxford observed, that the University preachers made use of notes for their sermons, but that none of "his Church" ever did; and Charles II. rebuked Dr. Dolben immediately after the Restoration, because he read his sermon, and the doctor omitted the practice in future.

On October 8, 1674, the king desired the Duke of Monmouth, then Chancellor of the University of Cambridge, to discountenance and put an end to the custom of reading sermons, as "unworthy of learned men, and a supine and slothful system which hath taken its beginning from the disorders of the late times,"—rather an anachronism, considering the volubility of the preachers of the Commonwealth. But that was the era of those Caroline divines of

whom George III. so truthfully declared that "there were giants in those days." South thought that reciting sermons, or repeating them by memory, so indispensable as to be "to a popular auditory upon the matter all," and yet, occasionally, he made signal failures in the attempt. On one occasion, when preaching before the king, his memory failed him, and he left the pulpit abruptly, exclaiming, "Lord, pardon our infirmities!" When Bishop Stillfleet was asked by Charles II. why he preached extemporaneously in all other places but in the presence of royalty, he replied, "And why, sire, does your majesty, who is such an able speaker, invariably read your speeches before Parliament?" "Because, my lord," retorted the witty king, "I have so often asked my subjects for money, that I cannot look them in the face." Bishop Jewel, however, who held that "a bishop should die preaching," could recite anything he had penned after one reading, says his biographer, and, therefore, usually, at the ringing of the bell began to commit his sermon to heart, and then he would say, "If ten thousand men were fighting around me it would not put me out." Bishop Burnet so trained his mind that he preached a consecration sermon in Bow Church at a moment's notice; and, when during a polemical sermon at the Rolls Chapel, he quietly held aloft the hour-glass, in which the sand had run down, and turned it for another hour, his congregation could scarcely refrain from expressing their satisfaction audibly. A preacher so fluent and ready could well afford to hazard the complaint, that England was the only country which endured reading of sermons. Swift followed in the same strain, alleging that the clergy would oppose the practice of preaching by heart, but that the laity would prefer it. The task was too severe for even Sanderson, as Walton tells the story in his incomparable manner: "Dr. Hammond came to enjoy a quiet conversation and rest himself with him for some days at Boothby Pannel, and did so. And having formerly persuaded him to trust his excellent memory and not read, but try to speak a sermon as he had writ it, Dr. Sanderson became so compliant as to promise he would. And to that end they two went early the Sunday following to a neighbour minister, and requested to exchange a sermon, and they did so. And at Dr. Sanderson's going into the pulpit, he gave his sermon, which was a very short one, into the hand of Dr. Hammond, intending to preach it as it was writ; but before he had preached a third part, Dr. Hammond, looking on his sermon as written, observed him to be out, and so as to the matter, especially the method, that he also became afraid for him, for it was discernible to many of that plain auditory. But when he had ended his short sermon, as they two walked homeward, Dr. Sanderson said, with much earnestness, "Good doctor, give me my sermon, and know that neither you nor any man living shall ever

persuade me to preach again without my book.' To which the reply was, "Good doctor, be not angry; for if ever I persuade you to preach again without book I will give you leave to burn all the books that I am master of."

When Sanderson's "Discourses" were printed in 1632, a wit made the remark that "the best sermons that were ever read were never *preached*." Tillotson once made the experiment, and after ten minutes of great pain to himself, fared no better than South or Sanderson, and came down with a firm resolution never again to repeat the attempt. Even the self-possessed Massillon faltered in the midst of a sermon, and became confused. Bishop Bull was more ready in an unexpected emergency. "One Sunday," says Nelson, "when he had begun his sermon, as he was turning over his Bible to explain some texts of Scripture which he had quoted, it happened, unfortunately, as it was thought, that his notes, contained in several small pieces of paper, flew out of his Bible into the midst of the church, by which means there was instantly raised a laugh in many of the congregation, consisting chiefly of wild sea-faring persons; these, concluding that their young preacher would now, for want of his materials, be entirely at a nonplus, were not a little pleased, and prepared themselves to sport at him with an air of contempt. But some, who were sober, or better-natured than the rest, condemning the levity of these scoffers, with great contempt, gathered them up and carried them to him in his pulpit. Mr. Bull took them, but perceiving most of the company there present to be rather inclined to triumph over him in that surprise, and to insult his youth, which stood in need of such props, immediately clapped his notes into his book again, and shut it, not without a great presence of mind, and then gave himself the liberty of discussing to them on the spot."

We have alluded to the ingenious expedients by which the clergy of the present day are relieved from the task of composing their own sermons; but their predecessors appear to have laboured under no difficulty. Toby Matthew actually preached during his long lifetime 1992 sermons. It is almost incredible, but the fact stands on good authority, when we hear of the fruitful brains of some preachers: Dr. Lichfield, rector of All Saints, Thames-street, London, who died in 1447, left behind him the amazing number of 3083 sermons.

The diffident and the indolent purloiners, if they frequently involve themselves in difficulties, owing to their surreptitious appropriation of the labours of other men, sometimes are suffered to retain their borrowed plumes and to prosper for a while. On the occasion of a charity sermon, one of these clerical pirates, fortunately for himself, but most unfortunately for the veritable Simon

Pure, delivered a most striking and persuasive address in the morning. Laud disliked evening sermons, and it would have been as well if his objections had been shared by the congregation, which was compelled impatiently to listen to the self-same sermon later in the day, preached as it had been printed by its author, who was, however, henceforward regarded by them as no better than an impostor.

We remember a clergyman of a very different stamp, one of the simplest and most estimable of men, who, on returning thanks when his health had been proposed at a large parish dinner, acknowledged the compliment which had been paid to his excellent sermon, and added, "Gentlemen, I am extremely glad that you approve of my discourse, for it was the very best with which my library could provide me."

In the case of the popular Bishop Andrewes, plagiarists were at fault—to steal his sermon was not to appropriate his preaching. "Pious and pleasant Bishop Felton," says Fuller, "his contemporary and colleague, endeavoured in vain in his sermons to assimilate his style, and, therefore, said merrily to himself, 'I had almost marred my own natural trot by endeavouring his artificial amble.'"

Another of such pirates was disconcerted by the observations of an old and well-read critic within earshot, who traced the stolen sentences home to their authors, saying audibly, "That's Sherlock," "that's Tillotson," "that's Blair," until the preacher, out of all patience, looked down, and said, "Sirrah, if you do not keep silent, the beadle shall turn you out." To which the grave old listener replied, quietly looking up in his face, "Sir, that his your own." The fat alderman of Cambridge, who had often endured anathemas of reprobation at St. Mary's Cambridge, for his somnolency, having, by Bishop Andrewes' advice, taken his nap beforehand, entirely put out the preacher, who had come ready with a terrible sermon on sleep, by keeping his eyes fixed upon the pulpit. But it went worse with Dr. Beadon, when rector of Eltham, for on giving out his text, "Who art thou?" and then pausing, a gentleman in uniform who had just entered the aisle, stopped suddenly, and supposing that the question was addressed to him, replied, "Sir, I am the recruiting officer of the 16th Foot, and having my wife and daughter with me here, should be glad of the acquaintance of the clergy and gentry of the neighbourhood!"

Preachers were formerly paid in kind, as Dr. Anthony Kitchen, Bishop of Llandaff, received for a sermon on the "Annunciation" from the churchwardens of St. Margaret's, in 1540, "a pike, price 2s. 4d., a gallon of wine, 8d., and his boat-hire—sum in all, 3s. 4d." Sermons were valued in the 17th century at 5s. or half-a-mark a-piece, though some received a more slender remuneration. In 1603 Dr. Adams, at the same place, received 10s. for three sermons.

Mr. Higgins took 30s. for five sermons ; while another less popular preacher was fain to accept 16s. 6d. for twelve sermons. Sir Julius Cæsar, the judge, commonly sent Bishop Hacket, when rector of St. Andrew's, Holborn, "a broad piece for each sermon, and gave a pair of gloves to any dean or bishop who preached, because he would not hear the Word of God gratis." Perhaps, no single sermon ever received more substantial acknowledgments, or achieved so great publicity, as the notorious discourse of Dr. Sacheverell on Palm Sunday, 1713, of which 40,000 copies were sold, while the rich living of Holborn was his ultimate remuneration. Charles I. was so pleased with a sermon of Dr. Forbes, a Scottish clergyman, that he determined that he should be a bishop forthwith ; and, as there was no diocese vacant at the time, actually created the see of Edinburgh for his convenience. It was a noble reply of Sir William Dawes, afterwards Archbishop of York, to the covert sneer of a courtier, that the tone of his sermons would not recommend him to favour : "Sir," he replied, "I never intended to get a mitre by preaching." Another brave preacher incurred the sarcasm of William of Orange, who declared that he observed the reverend divine had no mind for the mitre.

Queen Elizabeth was so perplexed with the conflicting doctrines of Churchman and Puritan within the pale of the Establishment, that she fulminated injunctions and ordinances, issued inquisitions and commissions, and finally decided that four preachers were quite sufficient for the wants of a whole county, and that the published homilies would amply serve to compensate for the dearth of original discourses. Within a few years the Puritans had effected a signal revolution in the popular mind. Prophesyings had to be forbidden in royal edicts, and restricted by canons and constitutions ecclesiastical. "Now is the world of sermons," observes Bishop Andrewes. "Take this very place, the house of God, which you see now weekly well replenished ; come at any other parts of the service of God, you shall find it, in a manner, desolate. And not here only, but go any whither else, you shall find even the like."

In not a few of our churches, on the side of the pulpit, remains curious relics of the past, the hour-glass, to remind the preachers of the time, a most desirable adjunct, and a piece of furniture much to be admired, when congregations now-a-days turn their back on the clock in front of the gallery, and facing the preacher. "The preacher," says good George Herbert, "exceeds not an hour in preaching, because all ages have thought that a competency, and he that profits not in that time, will less afterwards, the same affection which made him not profit before, making him then weary, and so he grows from not relishing to loathing." There is a picture of infamous Hugh Peters with a scroll issuing from his mouth,

"Come, let us take t'other glass." In country kirks, in Scotland, it is still the custom to combine the two Sabbath services, and with a short interval to follow up the morning sermon with the afternoon discourse, the congregation meanwhile retaining their seats. The Presbyterian and Independent, in the great rebellion, were equally lengthy.

"On Tuesday, Nov. 17th, 1640," we read, "was the fast day which was kept devoutly. Dr. Burgess and Mr. Marshall preached before the House of Commons, at least seven hours between them, upon Jeremiah 1. 5; and 2 Chronicles ii. 2." Charles II called Dr. Barrow an unfair preacher, not in reference to his demand upon the patience of his congregation, but alluding to the learning with which he exhausted his subject, and left nothing for his successor to handle. "He thought," writes Dr. Pope, "he had not said enough if he omitted anything that belonged to the subject of his discourse, so that his sermons seemed rather complete treatises than orations designed to be spoken in an hour." He was once requested by the Bishop of Rochester (Dr. Sprat), then Dean of Westminster, to preach at the Abbey, and withal desired not to be long, for that auditory loved short sermons, and were used to them. He replied, "My lord, I will show you my sermon;" and pulling it out of his pocket, put it into the bishop's hands. The text was in the tenth chapter of the Proverbs, the latter part of the eighteenth verse; the words these:—"He that uttereth slander is a fool." The sermon was accordingly divided into two parts—one treated of slander, the other of lies. The dean desired him to content himself with preaching only the first part, to which he consented, not without some reluctance, and in speaking that only it took up an hour and a half.

Another time, upon the same person's invitation, he preached at the Abbey on a holiday. Here I must inform the reader that it is a custom for the servants of the Church upon all holidays, Sundays excepted, betwixt the sermon and the evening prayers, to show the tombs and effigies of the kings and queens in wax to the meaner sort of people, who then flock thither from all the corners of the town. These, perceiving Dr. Barrow in the pulpit after the hour was passed, and fearing to lose that time in hearing which they thought they could more profitably employ in receiving—these, I say, became impatient, and caused the organ to be struck up against him, and would not give over playing till they had blown him down.

But the sermon of the greatest length was that concerning charity, before the lord mayor and aldermen, at the Spital, in speaking which he spent three hours and a half. Being asked, after he came down from the pulpit, whether he was not tired,

"Yes, indeed," said he, "I began to be weary with standing so long."

Bishop Alcock, the founder of Jesus College, Cambridge, preached for two hours before the University; in a drawing of the period, he is represented with two cocks, one on either side, fit emblems of the extraordinary vigilance required during such a lengthy oration.

Latimer had no such difficulty. In his protestation, he says, "I have spoken in my time before two kings more than once, two or three hours together without interruption." "And what should I say nothing else, these three or four hours, for I know it will be so long?" he asks deliberately in one of his sermons; and he soon after mentions, "Doctrine blown out by some for the space of three hours together," as if it was an ordinary length at the period. Cranmer hinted to him an hour and a half would be quite sufficient time, or the king and queen might "peradventure wax so weary at the beginning" (of his course of Lent lectures) "as to have small delight to continue with you throughout to the end."

We perceive that these lengthy preachers would have apologised in the ingenious mode of excuse adopted by Mr. Voiture: "I beg your pardon, pray excuse the length of this composition, but, really and literally, I had not the time to write shorter." Yet Latimer was so popular that in 1549, the pews were broken on the occasion when he preached, and the crowds he drew were so great that the pulpit, as Heylin informs us, was removed into Privy Gardens, and an old print represents him preaching in that position, while the Court is seen lounging at open lattices in front of the palace. Helyot mentions an inconvenient result of his popularity which attended the unfortunate Father Thomas Cannecte, who was afterwards burned at Rome. He attracted such large congregations in Flanders that "on fut obligé de le suspendre au milieu de l'église avec une corde, afin qu'il pût être entendu de tout le monde." Dr. Horneck was equally successful; for Dean Freeman said of him that he drew London to his chapel in the Savoy, and his parish was the largest in town, since it reached from Whitehall to St. Paul's. South, we fear, would have treated the orthodox divine as cavalierly as he would the threat of an old Roundhead; his was a very simple expedient for escape from a long sermon in prospect—a whisper to a friend, and an immediate retreat. Mr. Lob, a Dissenting teacher, who was so much in favour at Court as to be admitted into that king's most honourable privy council, being to preach one day while the doctor (South) was obliged to be resident at Westminster, the latter had the curiosity, since fame had spoke so much of him, to be one of his auditors *incognito*. Accordingly, he disguised himself and took a seat in the conventicle, where the preacher, being

mounted up in the pulpit, and naming his text, made nothing of splitting it up into twenty-six divisions, upon which, separately, he very gravely undertook to expatiate in their order. Hereupon the doctor rose up, and jogging a friend who bore him company, said, "Let us go home and fetch our gowns and slippers, for I find this man will make nightwork of it."

It was only with extreme self-constraint that Burke sat out a political sermon at Margate. The shortest sermon on record is that of Aunbothess, a Florentine, in the eighteenth century, which was preached at the request of a lad, who entreated him that he would be brief; it ran thus:—"Hodie est festus Divi Laurentii. Ejus vitam, superiore anno à me de hoc loco enarratam audistis. Cum interea temporis nihil narratu dignum præstiterit, otio ego vestro abuti nolo. Si qui non interfuerunt concioni anno superiore, ab iis qui interfuerunt doceri possunt." "To-day is the festival of St. Laurence. You heard me last year from this place give an account of his life. As nothing worthy of mention has come to hand in the meantime, I will not intrude on your time. Those who were not here on that occasion can receive information from those who were present." The Prince, archbishop of Cologne, however, surpassed the Florentine in brevity. He was appointed to preach in April, before the Court at Versailles, where a large and august congregation assembled. He ascended the pulpit, gravely bowed towards the royal closet, and then, shouting "April fools all!" ran down the stairs, says Deucos, "amid peals of laughter, and the roar of horns, clarions, and kettle-drums." How different were the gestures of the learned Hooker, seeming to study as he spoke, with his eyes immoveably fixed! or the still more celebrated Bandalone, who could not trust himself to preach but with his eyes shut, nor without his written sermon beside him, for not unfrequent reference. Westfield, bishop of Bristol, whom King Charles I. justly called a born orator, never entered a pulpit without a shudder and trembling, and once, when about to preach before the king at Oxford, actually fainted away.

Preachers have had recourse to buffoonery and base tricks to preserve or attain popularity. Lapencies, the Dane, if he found his audience inattentive, would pause to drink a glass of wine or play with a shuttle-cock. Whitfield produced a skull and held it aloft; and Bishop Aylmer, of London, revived the flagging attention of his congregation by drawing out a Hebrew Bible from the sleeve of his gown, and commencing to read it, an expedient which never failed in producing the desired effect. The Presbyterians at Holyrood jeered at Bishop Andrewes, saying that "he tossed and played with his text—here's a pretty thing and here's a pretty thing." King James, however, "would borrow a more than ordinary

sermon from him, and lay it still under his pillow,"—a somewhat questionable way of expressing his royal appreciation of its value.

In an old life of Latimer we have the following description of Master Hubberdin, a popular preacher of the day, who greatly provoked the wrath of the Puritans :—"Riding in his long gown down to his horse's heels by a church side, where the youth of the parish were dancing in the churchyard. Suddenly alighting from his horse by the occasion of their dancing, he came into the church, and there causing the bell to toll in the people, thought, instead of a fit of mirth, to give them a sermon of dancing Now dance Augustin, Ambrose, Hereim; and thus old Hubberdin, as he was dancing with his doctors lustily in the pulpit, against the heretics; how he stamped and took on I cannot tell, but crash quoth the pulpit, down came the dancer, and there lay Hubberdin, not dancing, but sprawling in the midst of the audience. Whereupon, when the churchwardens were called and charged for the pulpit, being no stranger, they made answer again, excusing themselves that they had made their pulpit for preaching and not for dancing." A very pertinent and commendable doctrine. A slight fall now-a-days might put a period to the modern innovations of those "tales and fables, dialogues, dreams, dancing, hoppings, and leapings, with other like histrionical toys and gestures used in the pulpit." Master Hubberdin was, however, a "humourist," and could adapt himself to his company. Steyne says "he once made an oration in the praise of thieves and thievery, which he did at the command of some highwayman that robbed him; and they, liking it so well, returned him his money again, and two shillings more to drink their health." Better treatment this than the Bishop of Hereford experienced under similar circumstances, in Merrie Sherwood, at the hands of Robin Hood and his archers in Lincoln green :

"Robin Hood took the bishop by the hand,
And he caused the music to play;
And he made the bishop dance in his boots,
And glad he could so get away.

Robin Hood took his mantle from his back,
And spread it upon the ground;
And out of the-bishop's portmanteau he
Soon told five hundred pound.

And then they brought him through the wood,
And set him on his dapple gray,
And gave him the tail within his hand,
And bid him for Robin Hood pray."

Preachers are singularly sensitive of mistimed interruptions and negligence on the part of their congregations. Andre Fallot was preaching before his archbishop, who fell most inopportunately asleep in the midst of the sermon, "Sirs," said the wit, "behold the

shepherd sleeps ; the wolves may be coming, pray shut to the doors."

At Whitehall South was preaching before the Court when he observed that Charles II, Lovedale, Rochester, and Laurence Hyde, were all asleep, and, gravely stooping over his pulpit, said in a loud tone, "My lord, I am sorry to interrupt you, but I must beg of you that you will not snore so loud, or you will wake the king." Charles woke up, and turning to the nobleman beside him, whispered, "Lory, your chaplain must be a bishop ; put me in mind of him at the next vacancy." General Monk was in the same plight in a city church, when Case, the Independent, rudely interrupted his slumbers from the pulpit by exclaiming, "There be men who would betray three kingdoms for filthy lucre's sake ;" and then deliberately threw his pocket handkerchief in the general's face.

Walpole, alluding to an ancient custom of separating the sexes in church, a custom not yet exploded in remote country villages, tells the story of a preacher rebuking his congregation for making an interruption :—" ' Please, your reverence,' cried the women, ' it is not on our side.' ' I am glad of it,' replied the clergyman, ' for it will be the sooner over.' "

In Cornwall, when the horrible practice of wrecking prevailed, a preacher, seeing the congregation rising from their seats during a storm and running towards the shore, cried out, "Stop, stop, good people, let us start fair ;" and at a large seafaring town on the east coast, a popular preacher from London abruptly closed his sermon on hearing several anxious knockings at the church-door, which occasioned the sudden dispersion of a considerable portion of his audience ; he thought that he had overtaxed their patience, but was relieved on learning that it was the signal for the pilots and crew to man the life-boat. A clergyman has been known, owing to want of thought and the too ample provision of two discourses in his sermon covers, to commence a second homily, and, in the midst of it, to find a large key thrust into his hand by the sexton, with the injunction to "lock the church-doors when he had done, as all the folks had gone out."

Archbishop Williams was no friend to the learned Peter Heylin, and when Dean of Westminster, interrupted him in a far less gracious spirit than was manifested by the courteous lay people of St. Margaret's. Heylin, as preacher of the day, gave utterance to some unpalatable truths, which pricked the compliant dean's conscience somewhat too sharply. Human endurance could not remain silent. "Enough of that," he cried aloud, "come down, brother Peter, come down." On May 31st, 1642, at a solemn fast, while the Commons were listening to the sermon, a messenger entered St. Margaret's Church, and communicated the discovery of

the plot of loyal Edmund Waller to frustrate the councils of the Parliament to Pym, who, having whispered the news to others, at once rose up and left the church, to the amazement of the congregation. This event was a slight commotion compared to a circumstance which occurred on Sunday evening, February 4, 1739, when the celebrated Whitfield preached one of his extraordinary discourses, having seized possession of the pulpit by violence, and then was locked up in it by the sexton and kept there, guarded by six lusty fellows, to the great confusion of the bewildered congregation. During the civil wars the Royalist clergy were frequently interrupted in their pulpits. Harrison, Vicar of Sandwich, was actually torn down while preaching. A file of musketeers was the usual instrument of annoyance. Hasket, afterwards Bishop of Lichfield, had a musket levelled at his breast by a Roundhead soldier in St. Andrew's, Holborn; he calmly turned to him and said, "Soldier, do your duty; I shall continue to do mine." His courage intimidated the ruffian, who at once retired with his companions. While Bishop Bull, when Rector of St. George's, near Bristol, was preaching, a certain ranter or quaker came into the church, and made a disturbance in the midst of his sermon, crying out aloud, "George, come down! thou art a false prophet and a hireling." Upon which the parishioners, who were for the most part seamen, and who loved their minister exceedingly, for his great bounty and hospitality among them, as well as for his good preaching, fell upon this poor quaker with such fury as obliged Mr. Bull to come down out of the pulpit to quiet them, and save him from the effects of their resentment; so getting in among them and warding off the blows that were falling very heavy upon the fellow, he addressed the quaker and the people; but the quaker could not answer him, and they fell upon him a second time with such violence that had not Mr. Bull wrestled very much among them, and by great entreaties prevailed upon them to spare him, and to lead and shut him out of the church, they would have worried him upon the spot. After which Mr. Bull went up again into his pulpit and finished his sermon.

Bishop Lindsay faced the furious mob in St. Giles Cathedral, Edinburgh, when Jenny Geddes hurled a stool at Dean Hannay's head; and Bishop Gray continued his sermon, although Bristol was in the hands of rioters in 1830.

While Bishop Westphaling was preaching in Christ Church Cathedral at Oxford, an enormous icicle, which had coated the spire, fell down with a crash so tremendous that the congregation fled away in terror. The Bishop knelt down one moment in prayer, reassured the fugitives, and completed his sermon. A still finer instance of calm self-possession occurred in the instance of Dr. Barth,

in the Church of Leipsic: he saw that he would in vain attempt to continue his sermon during the terrible storm of thunder and lightning which shook and lighted up the building; and so, saying "When God speaks, man should be silent," he resumed his seat till the tempest had passed away.

In the days of Gellary, when an obnoxious preacher in St. Paul's, Dr. Bourne, indulged in indecent reflections on King Edward VI., and some unpalatable commendations of Bonner, he was silenced by a flight of stones and the sight of a dagger sticking in his pulpit and narrowly escaping his person; and but for his timely rescue by Bradford and Rogers, afterwards martyrs, Dr. Bourne would soon have reached the end of his life and sermon at once.

The great apostle of the north, as Bernard Gilpin has been truly called, was preaching in the church at Rothbury, on the borders of Northumberland, when two parties of armed men met in the aisle, and being at feud instantly prepared to decide their differences in the house of God. The preacher rushed down from the pulpit and fearlessly, at the hazard of his own life, interposed his body between the infuriated combatants, who were advancing one at the other, sword in hand, and by a burst of holy eloquence wrung a promise from the leaders on both sides that they would not only respect the church but sit out the sermon. He then remounted the pulpit, and such was the impassioned power of his address that he received an assurance, which was faithfully kept, that while he remained in Rothbury, no blow should be struck and no angry word exchanged.

To his appointment to preach the sermon at Paul's Cross, poor Hooker, "the judicious," owed his introduction to his ill-sorted wife. When a candidate for the curacy of one of the most fashionable churches at the west-end ventured to hint to a rector of the last generation that the stipend was rather slender, he received this indignant reply, "Sir, small? Why in that gallery there is £7,000; in that aisle, £10,000; and in the body, £40,000 (the respective sums representing heiresses). Good morning! You have lost an opportunity!" Lord Bacon, in his *Apothegms*, tells this anecdote:—"There was a political sermon, that had no divinity in it, preached before the king. The king, as he came forth, said to Bishop Andrewes, 'Call you this a sermon?' The bishop answered 'By a charitable construction, an it please your majesty, it may be a sermon.'" The subtle villany of Adam de Orlton, Bishop of Hereford, wrought a king's death as surely as the coarse buffoon of the Rebellion, Hugh Peters, hastened the death of the royal Charles. He was preaching before the she-wolf of France, the traitor, Mortimer, and infatuated Edward II. at Oxford; his text was 2 Kings ix. 19, "My head acheth;" and he deliberately suggested that when a monarch's head became sick and diseased, it

must of necessity be taken off. He likewise gave a bishoply oracle a parody of the saying of an Archbishop Strimonium in reference to Gertrude, Queen of Hungary; for being consulted on the execution of his advice, he answered with a single line, which bears different meanings according to the punctuation:

“Edvardum occidere nolite timere bonum est.”

In religion,
What damned error but some sober brow
Will bless it, and approve it with a text,
Hiding the grossness with fair ornament?

The political commotions and momentous events affecting the temporal welfare of thousands have ensued from sermons. Dr. Sacheverell, in 1713, divided the country into two parties; and Hoadley's discourse, “My kingdom is Not of this World,” was the cause of the Bangorian controversy, and, eventually, of the virtual suppression of convocation. Hugh Peters, at St. Margaret's, blasphemously, in a sermon, compared the red-coats crowded on the pulpit stairs to “the Saviour;” while Charles I. was termed the “great Barabbas of Windsor;” one who must not be released, but must be delivered to death for the sake of the country. At the present day, it is the resolution of the House of Commons that no person be recommended to preach before the members who is under the dignity of a Dean in the Church, or hath not taken his degree of Doctor of Divinity. This motion was first made in consequence of a violent sermon by Stephens, Rector of Sutton, in Surrey, on January 30, 1699, in which he suggested that the martyrdom of Charles I. should be a “lesson to all kings, lest they come to the same end.” It is a sufficient proof of the Erastian spirit of the period, that the mitre and dignities of the Church, in close prospect before the eyes of Doctor of Divinity and Dean, were considered sufficient to retain them in loyalty; while the M.A. and beneficed clergyman were not equally conformable. The order was renewed June 4, 1742. On June 29, 1662, Dr. Creighton preached on Joshua vii. 13, in a very different spirit to Stephens or Peters; for he adduced the summary punishment of Achan and the Gibeonites as a precedent for the immediate execution of the regicides, then prisoners in the Tower, and eulogised the Parliament for their restoration of the bishops. Even the loyal Evelyn calls this “an extravagant sermon;” but the Dean received his reward in promotion to the Episcopal throne of Wells.

Richard III., with all his craft, could not control a preacher to keeping time. He desired a certain doctor at St. Paul's, at a concerted point in his sermon, to break forth into his praises, while he was to enter the Church apparently by accident. However, Crookback or the doctor made an error in their reckoning, and the duke

came in when the eulogium had been pronounced. He was not disconcerted, but directed the chapfallen preacher to go over the passage again.

When it was impossible to write an expostulatory letter to a newspaper, and an obnoxious pamphlet might be followed by a trip under Traitor's Gate, a preacher, on occasion, would venture on a political harangue. John White, Bishop of Winchester, was a plain-spoken man; on December 14, 1558, in his sermon at the grave of Queen Mary, he was carried away by his feelings, and took the text (Eccles. iv. 2), "Wherefore I praised the dead, which are already dead, more than the living which are yet alive;" and quoted Scripture, when he declared that "Mary had chosen the better part," and described her successor as one whom they must obey, inasmuch as "a living dog is better than a dead lion!" It is not surprising to add that the ungallant preacher was shortly after deprived of his see by a lady-pope who could as easily threaten, with a strong oath, to "unfrock a proud prelate," when Cox demurred to surrender his gardens at Ely-place, as she could call from her lattice to bid Dean Nowell retire from an ungodly digression and return to his text. When Archbishop Hutton preached a sermon, at Whitehall, on the text, "The kings of the earth are Mine," urging her to settle the succession, as "the presages of all men went northward," and pointed in the direction of Scotland, he soon received an ominous message; "for," said the queen, "he might as well have bid me pin my shroud about my face!" Bishop Aylmer, of London, incurred her severest indignation when he fulminated anathemas against excess of apparel in women's dress, and female vanity; and she significantly informed her ladies-in-waiting that, if the bishop tripped in like manner again, she "would fit him for heaven, but he should walk thither without a staff, and leave his mantle behind him!" Lloyd, of Worcester, who delighted in mystic solutions of the number "666," preached before her on Psalm xc. 12, and hinted that she was mortal; the truism provoked her querulous observation, "He might have kept his arithmetic to himself; but I see the greatest clerks are not the wisest men." Personalities in the pulpit are happily the exception, not the rule; but a well-known popular preacher in Dublin, in the days of "Planeus the Consul," commenced his sermon by gravely informing his audience on either side of the chapel that it was "a deuce of a hot day!" The congregation stared, and thought their idol had taken leave of his senses, when he proceeded to point out an unfortunate young gentleman below the pulpit, whom he had overheard on his way to church thus giving vent to his feelings, and forthwith made the subject of a discourse against foolish talking and swearing. Burnet said of Bishop

Croft, of Hereford, that "he was bold to the king in the wrong place—not in the closet, but in the pulpit."

The very titles of sermons, in the age of Elizabeth, were quaint. Prime printed a sermon which he called "the Marigold;" but in stilted absurdity, Richard Taverner, High-Sheriff of Oxfordshire, exceeded any preacher, lay or clerical. In 1561 there was but one preacher in the University; and in 1563 this worshipful gentleman, with a golden chain about his neck, and a sword by his side, scarcely covered by his damask gown, thus announced his errand in the University pulpit:—"Arriving at the Mount of St. Mary's in the stony stage where I now stand, I have brought you some fine biscuits baked in the oven of charity, carefully conserved for the chickens of the Church, the sparrows of the Spirit, and the sweet swallows of salvation."

The earliest instance of the use of a text at Oxford occurred in 1203. Bishop Burnet took for his text, November, 1684, for the anniversary sermon on the Gunpowder Plot, the text, "Save me from the lion's mouth; Thou hast delivered me from the horns of the unicorn;" and as the Dukes of York and Lauderdale considered that he alluded to the royal supporters, he lost both his lectureship and chaplaincy in consequence. Bishop Wren, when it was thought that the drainage of the Fens would injure the University of Cambridge, took for the text of his sermon before the judges, Amos v. 24, "But let judgment run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream." The Jesuit father of Louvaine, who abominated the fashion of ladies wearing wigs, ingeniously translated Isaiah iii. 24, "*Le Seigneur découvrira leurs perruques*;" but his enthusiasm was exceeded by an energetic contemporary, who, after a laborious search for an appropriate text in the vernacular, condemnatory of the huge head-dress of the eighteenth century, was compelled to content himself with a portion of St. Matthew xxiv. 17, "top-not come down;" the contempt of taste and grammar being about equal in absurdity. A very admirable sermon is said to have been preached on the text of "malt," which was supplied by a wag to a clergyman who declared that he could discourse on any word, however far-fetched; and he fulfilled his promise by resolving the word into letters, on the principle of an anagram. Swift was particularly ingenious in his choice of texts. Conceiving himself neglected by Butler, Duke of Ormond, the witty Dean of St. Patrick's took occasion, when preaching before his grace, to select the verse from Gen. xl. 23, "Yet did not the chief butler remember Joseph, but forgot him." He had been asked to preach before the worshipful company of Merchant Taylors, but taking offence at the terms in which the invitation was made, he took for his text Rom. ix. 27, "A remnant shall be saved." The breeches-makers and

contrivers of curious habiliments were greatly offended at the sarcasm, and entered a solemn remonstrance against the dean's trifling. They, however, very imprudently accepted his apologies and offer to make ample amends in the following year. The anniversary came round, and, to their horror, the text was Psalm cv. 31, "And there were lice in all their quarters." Swift said of himself that he "preached but twice in his life; then they were not sermons, but pamphlets against 'Wood's halfpence.'" Mr. Pitt was an undergraduate at Cambridge, under the tutelage of Mr. Prettyman, at the time of his accession to office, in 1784; and ambitious "dons," fellows anxious for rustication and *aplaçens uxor*, and heads of houses impatient of the lesser senate house, in prospect of the bench by the "woolsack," vied in their court to the young statesman. Paley said that if he had been appointed preacher at St. Mary's, he would have taken his text from St. John vi. 9: "There is a lad here which hath five barley loaves and two small fishes; but what are they among so many?" But, perhaps, without exception, the most ingenious in such quaint devices was that of the famous Dominican, who defended the use of tobacco from a furious counterblast of the Pope, who prohibited it under pain of a rigorous penance. The friar took the text Job. xiii. 25, "Wilt thou break a leaf driven to and fro? and wilt thou pursue the dry stubble?"

There is only one sermon on record that lacked the immemorial prefix of a text. Frederick the Great wanted a chaplain for his chapel royal; a candidate shortly appeared; the king promised to provide him with a text, on which he was, for his part, to preach extempore. Sunday came, morning prayer was concluded, into his royal closet strode his majesty, and an aide-de-camp, bearing a sealed packet, advanced towards the clergyman, and placed it in his hands. The preacher gravely opened it before the congregation—"Here," said he, with admirable composure, "is nothing, and there is nothing: out of nothing God created all things;" and proceeded to describe the wonders of creation. Dr. Delaney, by favour of the Dean of the Chapel Royal, was appointed to preach before George II., but neglected to send in the text to the royal closet. He arrived late, and sat down beside the reader, where the verger at length spied him, to his great relief, and plucking the doctor by the sleeve, said there was "No text!" The doctor was highly indignant, and replied that he had a text, and kicked the unfortunate vesturer smartly; the poor man persevered, the doctor was bewildered, and, at length, the reader himself had to interfere, and acquaint him with his omission.

"The person preaching," says George Herbert, "sometimes tells his hearers stories and sayings of others, according as his text

invites him ; for them, also, men hear and remember better than exhortations, which, though earnest, often encumber the sermon." We may, on a future occasion, give some curious illustrations of the learning, the eloquence, the argument, the wit, and the stories, by turns grave and gay, which illustrate the sermons of the times of Hacket, South, Andrewes, and Taylor—pathetic, humorous, simple, and sublime by turns. It is easy to imitate their peculiarities, but those who incline to do so would do better to remember what Bishop Buckeridge relates of one of those worthies : "Few of his solemn sermons but passed his hand and were thrice revised before they were preached." Brevity and method are indispensable in these days of diffused education and rapid thought ; earnestness and self-identification with the awful themes which he handles are essential to a preacher's influence ; as Garrick reminded the clergyman who complained of his ill-success in declaring truths, and the actor's success in the representation of fictions—"It is a good divine that follows his own instructions ; a man can easier teach twenty what were good to be done, than be one of the twenty to follow his own teaching ;" and "Honesty will wear the surplice of humility over the black gown of a big heart."

THE IRISH ALL SOULS' NIGHT

The common people in Galway believe that departed souls wander near their former habitations. In a stormy night they often say—"God help the poor souls!" They believe that in one night alone of the year—All Souls' Night—they are allowed to enter the houses, and on that night, therefore, the people put their rooms in order, make good fires, and open their windows, that the souls may come in and warm themselves.

THE dreamy thoughts of Erin's son
Oft to his perished friends are sped,
As pondering o'er the deeds they've done,
He asks: "How is it with the dead?"

When suns are warm and breezes sweet,
When fruits are ripe and flowers are new,
His fancy, pleased with life and heat,
Dreams that the spirits feel them too.

And when the gust is filled with rain,
And mist along the mountain rolls,
He mourns the naked spirit's pain,
And says: "God comfort the poor souls!"

One night in all the year, he deems
Those homeless souls may pass the door—
Bask in the hearth's domestic beams,
And taste the food of man once more.

That night the house is dress'd and swept,
And door and window open thrown;
The hoarded turf a-blaze is kept—
The household loaf and milk put down.

Old Patrick and his mate had rear'd
Their brood, and all had taken wing—
Blessed, e'er their flight, by lips revered,
Save one, a fair deluded thing.

None come again; in storm or war,
Or wreck, they knew each dear one's sleep;
But knew not hers, and wept the more,
Not knowing what they had to weep.

But grief had ceased to throb and start;
Veiled by life's common cares, he lay
A heavy slumberer in the heart—
Save on the Dead Man's Holiday.

That day he woke, and longed to hear
Dear voices murmur on his brain :
And felt, with weary soul, the drear
Vain longing to be glad again.

Ten of these Hallow-e'ens had fled,
Since, for their last, their eyes were wet ;
And now once more the board was spread—
The seat before the fire was set.

The door stood open to the sky,
That shivering souls might enter in ;
And stormy winds were blowing high,
Chasing the clouds across the scene.

The moon, at times, white radiance threw—
Quick growing, fading quick away ;
Once, steadfast more, that radiance grew,
As on the threshold, fain to stay—

It took a seeming form and motion—
A shape among the shades grew plain :
“Save us ! O Mary !—dreadful notion—
The spirit takes its clay again !

It pauses, cowering low—ah, no !
Do I the grave's indweller trace ?
Yet, husband ! wherefore look'st thou so ?
Dost thou, too, see a once-known face ?

O Heaven ! it moves !—Nay, come not near !
What art thou ? Stay thy step so wild :
See, on its face a human tear—
What world sends back my hapless child ?”

“Mother ! the grave has not yet given
Its welcome to thy child forlorn ;
No leave to die, from pitying Heaven,
Has Grief, my stern familiar, borne.

Once from this home I took my flight ;
Long time I fear'd the home I fled ;
But from afar I've toiled to-night,
To enter with the happy dead.

I live ; but life is cold and drear ;
God's storms and man's about me roll :
'Tis Mercy's day—oh, father dear !
Oh, mother ! pardon the poor soul.”

TRAMPS

OF the many proofs that man, in the perversity of his fallen nature, chooses the evil and refuses the good, not the least remarkable is his voluntary adoption of an unsettled and uncertain mode of life, whilst surrounded by facilities for cultivating regular and remunerative habits of industry. Strange it is, but true, that in this country multitudes should be found for whom there should be a special charm in that condition of human existence, which was first imposed upon man for the crime of murder, a condition so insupportable, that he on whom sentence was pronounced by the Almighty said, "My punishment is greater than I can bear." The sentence was this, "when thou tillest the ground it shall not yield thee her strength, a fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth." It is curious to observe that from the very beginning, agricultural pursuits and settled habits have been identified, that settled habits and civilised habits have been synonymous, and that all the records of discoveries by travellers coincide in testifying that savagery and the ignorance of agriculture have always been found together.

The curse pronounced upon our first parents was indirect and modified. The ground was cursed, for man's sake, it was to bring forth thorns and thistles to him, he was to eat of it in sorrow, he was to eat bread in the sweat of his face; but observe, he was, nevertheless, to eat bread of it, and, moreover, in the very curse he had a blessing, for he must *sweat* before he could eat, and therein consisted his bodily preservation. It needs no deep physiological study to prove the fact, that the free action of the pores is not only conducive to health, but absolutely necessary for life; close up these doors and windows of the human frame, and the man dies.

On Cain the curse fell direct, unmitigated save only in respect of the felon's brand, which, while it protected him from human vengeance, did but prolong his misery: "Thou art cursed from the ground which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand." The blood-stained virgin soil was actually forbidden to make any return to his labour. Cain was absolutely precluded from the reward of agricultural industry; he must submit to the stern decree of God and be a vagabond.

Now, though it might be interesting if possible to trace to a similar origin the savage history of nations ignorant of agriculture, and though individual instances might be found presenting a remarkable similarity to that of Cain, still there is an idiosyncrasy of retributive justice in the punishment of the first murderer which warrants us in believing his case to have been an isolated one. As

a general rule, the Inspired Word is verified on all sides, that "in all labour there is profit," and as long as the bow is seen in the cloud, the husbandman especially has the assurance that God's covenant with the earth stands firm, and that he may "plough in hope" and "sow in hope."

But there is no necessity for enlarging on this suggestive point. It may suffice, with reference to the title of this article, to observe that vagabondism in any shape is a curse, a curse to the vagabond himself, and a curse to the community up and down which he wanders. If the criminal statistics of this country, with reference to the enormous number of people commonly called tramps could be collected, it would be found that, both physically and morally, they exercise a most baneful influence. I have had some experiences of common lodging-houses, and have studied the tramp proper for years, and it is my settled conviction that of all dangerous classes, so called, none is more dangerous.

To illustrate this by contrast, take the case of one who can say, like the Shunamite, "I dwell among mine own people." It may be a humble cottager, with a good old county name, who lives in the home where he was born, where his forefathers, perhaps, for two generations, were born. Sound that man, and though his philosophy may not be deep, nor his knowledge extensive, nor his notions very advanced, yet you will find in his love of locality a love of country, in his cheerful recognition of local authority the principle of loyalty, and in the daily routine of what might seem to many monotonous toil, a healthy regularity and contentedness, eminently conducive to the cultivation of that practical religion, which teaches a man to "do his duty in that state of life unto which it has pleased God to call him."

Then take the genuine tramp. Born, it may be, he knows not where, possibly ignorant as to his parentage; or if he have a birth-place, or can tell who were his father and mother, yet dead to all early domestic associations—a voluntary waif and stray on the surface of society; he belongs to nowhere—he has no wish to belong to anywhere; the sacred idea of home is a thing to which he is an utter stranger; he is always away from home; he cares for nobody and nobody cares for him; and to him existence has no greater charm than this,—that when he rises in the morning, whether his bed has been a shake down in some den of thieves, or the sheltered side of a haystack, he does not know where he shall breakfast, dine, or sleep next. It must be something like the infatuation which impels the gambler, that keeps the vagabond in his continual delirium of uncertainty as to his future, while his unsettled bodily condition reacts upon his mind. Losing the landmarks of social habits, he fails to distinguish between right and wrong; ready for vice or

villany, as they may offer him a lure, he first inflicts an injury upon society, and then believing, by a natural consequence, that society is inimical to him, he resolves to play upon it by every device which perverted ingenuity, and perhaps a keen observation of the credulity of human nature, can invent.

To take the tramp in all the varied phases in which he presents himself in England, would be to write a volume. The limits of this article will only admit of mentioning a few. There is the genuine professional, who may be seen at all the rude festive seasons of our great industrial districts. Take, for example, the pottery towns of North Staffordshire,—a conglomeration of towns which extend in a direction north and south for about six miles, begin their *wakes* about Midsummer; as these die out in one town they revive in another, till at the end of about six weeks, each having had its turn, the caterers of the great pleasure market, after clearing the pockets of the operatives, move off, and the working people resume their occupations very much the worse as regards worldly matters for their seasons of “play,” but hoping to be right by the time that the periodical season of amusement comes round again. Now, it would be a curious study during such a season as this to observe the tramp. Some with an ostensible mode of living—the majority begging. Year after year you may see the same neatly bandaged stumps of arms or legs; the same turnpike sailors, the same groups of doleful minstrels, the father, mother, and children (who, of course, are out of employment), and the same artful dodgers, up to anything in the way of pocket-picking, or passing bad coin, or improvising some new tale of distress, suggested by local circumstances,—a colliery explosion or a depression in some branch of trade. By the way, it is remarkable what a number of these people, belong to a trade which has gained some notoriety in the *Times* as being in a bad state. Some years ago, when public attention had been directed to the miserable condition of the trade of Coventry, the number of ribbon-weavers out of work who tramped the country was amazing. So with an emigration movement, numbers of tramps will go about with their books for subscriptions; they are Sheffield cutlers or something else, forming a colony. In fact, there is no limit to the ingenuity with which advantage will be taken of circumstances, local or general, to get up a begging scheme.

As an example of the way in which the genuine tramp will lay hold of anything by which to work, one instance, out of many that could be adduced, may be given. I lived for more than twenty years in a manufacturing town in the north of England, which lay in the old mail coach route between Liverpool and London. (N.B.—The tramp seldom diverges from main roads). Having

been several times severely bitten, I had made the tramp my study, and could distinguish one at sight. I warned my wife against relieving strangers at the door; she thought me hard-hearted. One day a tramp got two-and-sixpence from her, and was off before I could interfere. The story was plausible, and the tramp, as my wife said, was "such a nice-spoken woman," that the plea was, to her at least, irresistible. It was briefly this. She was the daughter of a woman who had been many years housekeeper to that excellent man, Mr. Close, of Cheltenham. Her husband, a market gardener, had heard of a good opening at our town M——, had left home to make inquiry, had written to his wife saying that he had found a situation, and had taken a house, and that she must sell up—and reserving only railway-fare for herself and the children, send all she could realise by P.O. order, to furnish the new residence. This she had done, and after waiting awhile, but receiving no answer to her remittance, she had set out. On arriving at the post-office, she had found to her horror that the husband had drawn the money, but was nowhere to be found; she said that while weeping over her disaster at the post-office, a gentleman came up, condoled with her, and said, "I have no money about me, but go to Mrs. P——, tell her that Dr. H—— bid you do so; I am her medical man, and she will know by this that I have sent you—her little boy is ailing, and I visited him yesterday. "Now," said my wife, as she told me all this, "how could such a story be trumped up?" Nevertheless I was incredulous, and my unbelief intensified, when a neighbour, another patient of Dr. H——, came in about an hour afterwards, to inquire if we knew of such a person—that she had been to their house making use of the doctor's name, speaking of his kindness, and saying that he was attending two of her children in small-pox, and that one child was dead in a certain street in my parish. The tramp was, in case No. 2, the same Cheltenham woman. Slipping out quietly, I first ascertained that no such person had ever been in such a street, so I went to the inspector of the police, and put him on the scent. Next day he came to say he thought he had her. I took my wife and a servant-girl who had just seen the woman at our door, to the police-office. They instantly identified her, but she, poor innocent creature, had never seen either of them before. Next day, however, my wife and servant, the doctor, and victim No. 2, having all given their testimony before the magistrates, "the nice-spoken woman" was sent for three months to the House of Correction. The case was no doubt duly registered at the registered lodging houses, and for many a long day we had no tramps at our door. But how, it will be asked, did this tramp make up the story for my wife. It was thus. The servant-girl, a simple country lass, opened the door. The

tramp asks, "Does Mr. P—— live here?" "Yes." "Is Mrs. P—— in?" "Yes." Then the tramp looks into the passage and sees the little boy—and asks, "Is that their child?" "Yes." "Has he been ill lately?" "Yes, the doctor was here yesterday." "What is the doctor's name." "Dr. H——" Tell Mrs. P—— I wish to see her; and while the unsuspecting girl went for her mistress, the tramp concocted this tale.

If it were possible to give anything like a favourable *rationale* of the existence of the tramp in this country, it might perhaps be set down to that love of adventure which is so common to Englishmen; but taking the class generally, there is too much skulking idleness and untruthfulness about them to admit of so dignified an explanation of their disreputable mode of life. The simplest and safest way to account for it, is to set it down as the result of a natural dislike to labour, a desire to escape from the law of our present existence, that man must eat bread in the sweat of his face; that if he work not, neither shall he eat. Indirectly the tramp testifies to the overflowing benevolence of his countrymen, and to that easy good-nature which can never see a case of seeming misery without relieving it. Upon this, the reader will find some excellent remarks in Archbishop Whateley's Annotation on Bacon's Essays, p. 115. "Goodness admits no excess but error." The error on which the tramp thrives is that most pernicious habit of giving indiscriminate alms; and the only way to meet it is by laying down a rule never to relieve a case which cannot be investigated. The writer has foiled many a tramp who has come with the lie circumstantial, by simply putting on his hat and saying, "Very well, I will go with you and visit the case." The answer was invariably, "But I am going the other way." In large towns infested by these pests, there is a very good plan which was some years ago adopted in Bradford, Yorkshire. The benevolent formed a general fund and established an inquiry-office, where there was an agent whose business it was to visit all cases and relieve them. Each subscriber was provided with relief tickets for casuals; the tramp was instructed to take this ticket to the office, when the agent made inquiry. The practical working of the plan was this: that a very small per-centage of those who received tickets ever went to the office, for the simple reason that the case was not genuine.

The regular professional, arriving at a moderate-sized town, goes to work scientifically. By paying for it at the lodging-house, or conferring with "pals" who have worked the locality before, he very soon takes stock of the inhabitants, and knows exactly where to call and where to keep a wide berth. I have got rid of numbers by a few words such as, "Now my man, you belong to *somewhere*,

and wherever that is, you have a legal claim for relief; you have no right to be on the road. Go about your business, and look sharp, or I'll have a constable at your heels!"

In country places all this is not so easily managed, but even there a little common sense, observation, and firmness, will enable people to counteract the evil, and check that vagabondism which never has been, nor ever will be, anything less than a curse to the community.

C. O'. N. P.

THE RELIGIOUS ELEMENT IN THE ORIGIN OF DRAMATIC REPRESENTATION

MAN does not take long to form an idea of his apparent greatness; his real littleness he is not so ready in apprehending. The fact of his littleness forbids his appreciating it. But as he increases in knowledge, that is, as his mind grows into a more perfect form, and the human approaches the divine, he begins at length to entertain some persuasion of his insignificance. That this state of mind is a cultivated state, we do not wish to deny; but that it is not a true one, and that in such a condition his mind does not draw near perfection, we do not admit. To know his insignificance, that is, to know himself, is the acme of man's knowledge. We utter a sentiment which, though Pagan in its origin, is true in its application to Christians too, when we say, "*E cælo descendit—vñ θ σεαυτόν.*" Since, then, knowledge of self is a highly-refined state of knowledge, and inculcated by divine inspiration, we may conclude with reason that, owing to the infirmity of his nature, man is slow in its acquirement. But when he has acquired, whether by experience or research, a certain amount of this philosophic knowledge, he has become, by a contemporaneous and gradual process, more alive to such a sense of his astounding ignorance, as utterly bewilders him in its vastness; and so, under the discipline of reason and intellectual development, arrogance and pride give place to the lowest reverence and humility.

Thus much we have said in reference to man's appreciation of his littleness, in comparison with an unseen Divinity, by a *cultivated and gradual* process. There is, however, another condition of the human mind, which, in an utterly different form itself, brings about the same result as the highly-developed condition of which we have just made mention. Here, too, we may state that, in what may be termed the "physical chronology" of man's nature, the mental condition we are placing in a secondary position in this paper, should, properly, have claimed prior attention. For we speak of that principle which, even in nations of the most remote antiquity, and so in the most pristine form of the intellect of man, forms an inseparable and deeply-rooted element of the mental organisation. Let it be noted that this principle exists quite apart from any artificial state of mind; it is the pure essence of the most uncultivated intellect; it was probably the dominant thought in the mind of Adam; will probably lie extant, perhaps though not called forth, in the mind of the last man;—it is the persuasion of a Divine existence. This principle is innate with man, co-existing

with his constitution, and forms a connecting link between God and man, as such. In nations, races, and individual persons, it varies with the constitutional tendencies of character and disposition that give it origin, and is realised accordingly. The sources of its existence will bear examination in another place.

Thus we see the two general principles, by means of one or other of which man is always and under all circumstances impressed with the idea of his inferiority to some ruling divinity. The distinctive thought that occurs at once to us in noticing these two principles is, that one is latent in, and co-existing with the human mind in its most uncultivated condition, and among nations quite remote from any refined state of civilisation; and that the other, on the contrary, is common to men in the most civilised periods of time. We know not how to say whether of the two is the more perfect, or that the one is a truer condition of intellect than the other; and we can only be sure that the general principle must exist, so long as man holds relationship to God, to teach him his duty to divinity.

It has been observed above, that the religious element which partakes so essentially of man's nature, and is instilled so thoroughly into his constitution, varies in its effects according to the diverse temperament of nations and individuals. But so laborious in its workings to make real the ideal, and so powerful in its endeavours to materialise itself, has the persuasion of an existing divinity ever been, that in all nations alike, and in all countries, ages, and individuals alike we find its traces, traces which Time itself, though "*edax rerum*" in general, will fail to entirely obliterate. Its action is traceable in the most beautiful and substantial effects of art and literature. Thus completely did the religious principle in man succeed in its endeavours to materialise and make real, what only, in fact, existed in his imaginative faculties.

Having laid down a proposition, that the effects of the religious principle is observable in the history of all countries, it will be well, before proceeding to examine its immediate action in the origin of dramatic representation, to notice some other of its extraneous effects; for, to quote the words of one whose opinion on this subject is in every respect entitled to a hearing, "although art and religious realism have much in common even in their latest applications, we are not to suppose that all attempts to give an outward embodiment to the religious idea are to be considered as real approximations to dramatic poetry. We may lay this fact down as a rule, at the outset; that it is in those nations whose religion was polytheistic and idolatrous, that art is found in its highest and most pure effects; and that those nations, on the other hand, whose

religion partook of an uniform and spiritual—rather than carnal—character, are most dilatory in the production of any of the highest types of art.

Among the Israelites, for example, the whole of the above principles and remarks will hold good, for their entire history shows their endeavours—endeavours which were by no means always successful—to resist the temptations to idolatry by which they were surrounded. But very little evidence is patent of progress made in the fine arts; and even in the most flourishing period of their monarchy, when their greatest and wisest king desired to erect a temple to God himself,* they were compelled to call in the aid of artists selected from their idolatrous neighbours; and Greece and modern Europe were left to educe “the greatest aid to abstract thought,—the alphabet which we still employ.” The very incomplete metrical system, too, of the Hebrews, was owing to their inartificial constitution; how incomplete that system was it is needless to remark to those who are acquainted with the wonderful perfection and systematic method of arrangement noticeable in Greek poets.

Another example of the rule we mentioned above, is readily offered in the pontifical days of the Roman empire, when the drama, as it then existed, had lost all traces of its religious origin, and of its connection with heathen orgies. For, according as Christian nations gave approbation to, or expressed their disgust at the sensual rites performed in the Basilika, in the same proportion the drama flourished or declined.

Having noticed two out of the many instances of nations in whose constitutional tendencies the religious principle was not productive of any dramatic issue, we may return to its more immediate effects on the origination of the ancient drama. The examination into this part of the question divides itself into two topics for consideration; to determine, first, in what nations and from what concurring causes the religious principle was realised under a dramatic form; and second, what traces are observable in the subsequent history of the drama of its religious origin.

I. With regard to the former of these two questions, we think that our object will be gained if we can ascertain in what countries the constitutional organisation of the inhabitants was such as to develop the subsisting religious elements under a dramatic form. For we have seen that it was the constitutional tendency in each country that led to the realisation of the religious principle in any way; we must, therefore, determine

* 1 Kings vii. 13.

whether climate or any other circumstantial cause will account for the drama and mimetic performances being taken as means for the development of the religious principle.

It is a fact, no more strange than true, that the drama, as also everything that is beautiful in literature and art besides, is begotten of that principle which degraded man into "a grovelling worshipper of wood and stone," and made him pay homage, though himself a god of the earth, to idols made by his own hands. Now what is this principle? It is what has been termed—for want of a better title—"the love of imitation;" we should prefer, however, with Mr. Donaldson, to explain this principle as the yearning to express in a tangible, visible way, what existed only in imagination; or as that desire to "render the conceivable perceivable," which is found in the elementary analysis of the uneducated mind. This, to all appearances, was the idea entertained by Aristotle with regard to the origination of the fine arts. No one can read his *Treatise on Poetry* without coming to this conclusion;* for he obviously wishes to make the principle of *μίμησις*, or imitation, as the basis of not only poetry, but of each and all of the fine arts; whereas he aims at refuting the arguments of Plato, who desired to represent the mimetic principle as nothing more than a narrow, servile imitation of individual objects. We may quote Aristotle's own language with regard to the origin of the drama, since it will not demand much space. "Poetry, in general, seems to have derived its origin from two causes, each of them natural. I. To *imitate* is instinctive in man from his infancy. . . . All men, likewise, naturally receive pleasure from *imitation*. . . . II. Imitation being thus natural to us; and, again, harmony and rhythm being also natural, . . . those persons in whom originally these propensities were the strongest, were naturally led to rude and extemporaneous attempts, which, gradually improved, gave birth to poetry."†

Now, with regard to the nations whose constitutional tendencies urged them to represent under the dramatic semblance their religious principle, it has been remarked that the inhabitants of Southern Europe, especially, have always exhibited endeavours to embody their abstract notions of divinity in a form palpable to their external senses. For the idea of a divinity was the first that occurred to them, and that divinity, conceived in one or other of his attributes, they were anxious to bring under the control of their bodily faculties. They *felt* the power of the Deity giving tone to the material world by an unobserved, but not an unappreciated

* Cf. Aristotle, *Rhet.* iii., 1, 8. † Aristot: *Poet.* iv. Twining's Translation.

process; they bowed themselves in awe to certain phases of the natural earth, which they believed to be the result of His all-pervading hand; they knew, by the instinctive tuition of which we have spoken, that, in comparison with this superior power, they were insignificant, and willingly, for that reason, brought the aid of art to assist them in the homage which by the same internal recognition they saw was due to Him. And now we reach the turning point of our examination into this question. For the worshippers would naturally next attempt some *outward expression* of their gratitude and homage; and to meet this necessity poetry, that is, the dramatic motive-principle, arose.

Thus we see, and shall see further, that dramatic art, wherever it existed as a genuine product of the soil, has always had some connexion in its origin with the rites of elementary worship. The deity which the worshippers thus constituted for themselves was, by a very little extension of the religious principle, supposed to be subject to passions of the same sort as those entertained by themselves. Their mimetic temperament immediately suggested those cyclic dances and mimic movements which were the earliest beginnings of the Greek drama.

Although it is needless, as regards conducing to our subject, to examine the dramatic effects of the religious principle in any other country but Greece (for the drama of modern Europe is identical in its origin with the Greek drama, although, from necessity, considerably modified), yet, to show the general identity of the religious principle, developed simply by the constitutional tendencies of different nations, it will be as well to notice another instance of a country where polytheism and idolatrous worship had an immediate influence on the origination of the ancient drama. We refer to India and Hindoostan, where the dramatic art arose from the orgies that sprang out of a personification of the powers of nature. It ought, however, to be mentioned, that Weber, with perhaps, a very few others, considers the Hindoo drama as "influenced by the performance of the Greek dramas at the courts of the Greek kings." Lassen, on the contrary, with many others, considers the Hindoo drama as a product of the soil, and derived from the religious ceremonies of the inhabitants. So, too, in those parts of Italy where scenic entertainments existed before the introduction of the Greek drama, the same was the case.

We may mention, again, that in certain parts of the Continent, at the present day (or, at all events, till quite recently), it is the custom to represent on the stage annually, on Good Friday, the crucifixion of our Lord; and this is done with no blasphemous or mischievous intent, but the whole performance is conducted in the most reverent and solemn way possible—the most virtuous and morally-

disposed youth in the village being selected to act the part of our blessed Lord in that solemn tragedy.

And now, with regard to the motive agency of mind that evinced itself in the earliest period of dramatic productions of Athens, it may be well to speak a little. Strabo remarked,* "the whole art of poetry is in praise of the gods." What was it that kept continually prompting the worshippers to devote all their energies in the praise and the adoration of their divinity? And how are we to account for the fact that, in all ages of Athenian history, "there was no manner of employing wealth which seemed so appropriate to Grecian feeling, or tended so much to procure influence and popularity to its possessors, as that of contributing to enhance the magnificence of the national and religious festivals?" Now, the answer to this question is this: the constitutional temperament of the inhabitants of Greece, arising from the climate and their social system of education and religion, joined to their fervid imagination, was the motive-principle of the observances of the Greek drama. In reference to the former of the two questions proposed before—which has already overshot our intended limits—we cannot do better than draw our remarks to a conclusion in the emphatic language of Mr. Donaldson: "The susceptible Athenian, whose land was the dwelling-place of gods and ancestral heroes, to whom the clear blue sky, the swift-winged breezes, the river fountains, the Ægean, gay with its countless smiles, and the teeming earth from which he believed his ancestors were immediately created, were alike instinct with an all-pervading spirit of divinity; the Athenian, who loved the beautiful but loved it because it was divine; who looked upon all that genius could invent or art execute, as but the less unworthy offering to his pantheism, and considered all his festivals, and all his amusements as only a means of withdrawing the soul from the world's business, and turning it to the love and worship of God, how could he keep back from the object of his adoration the fairest and best of his works!"

II. The traces evident in the subsequent history of the drama of its religious origin, now demand attention. We have said that in India, and certain parts of Italy, polytheism had great influence on the *beginning* of the ancient drama; but in Greece, not only was this the case with regard to the origin, but also the progress and decline of the drama; in fact, traces of the religious principle are observable so long as the stage existed in Greece; and the reason of the high place—we may say, the foremost place—that the Greek drama held among all nations, was its continued connection with the worship

* ἡ ποιητικὴ πάντα ὑμνητικὴ, x. p. 468.

† Grote's History of Greece, viii. p. 444.

of Bacchus, which gave origin both to tragedy and comedy. Nor must we allow ourselves to be misled by a knowledge of this fact, that the drama of modern Europe exhibits no signs of any religious origin, though derived from a Greek source, for the perpetually changing tastes of succeeding generations have so imbued their drama with contemporaneous ingredients, as to render the religious element nearly inappreciable. In Greece, however, the drama retained to the last undoubted evidences of its religious source, because the bonds of principle that connected the dramatic performances with their religious origin were never broken, but left their traces in the circumstance that the theatrical representations were, afterwards, always parts of a religious festival, the very plays themselves being performed in a building dedicated to Bacchus.

Those who are aware of the nature of the system employed in the worship of Bacchus, Apollo, and Diana, will be aware, at the same time, of the many opportunities such a system would offer to the susceptible imaginations of the Athenians of constituting a ceremonial capable of dramatic representation. The sun, called variously in the Semitic nations, by some one of the male* terms, Bel or Baal, and Melek, Molech, Molock, Milkom, or Malchan; the moon, regarded as a female deity, worshipped as Asherah or Astarte; each of these had material attributes, which conduced in the highest degree to the production of dramatic performances. Indeed, so great is the series of divinities, not only among the Semitic nations, but in Greece and Italy too, as to preclude our even noticing them in this place. Thus we see that the very system of dramatic representation in Greece; that is to say, the place, manner, and time of such representations, were all eminently calculated to preserve the religious principle which was at the bottom of the entire dramatic element.

It will have appeared that in this essay chief emphasis has been laid upon the religious element in the drama of *ancient Greece*. We need scarcely add that, upon investigation, it is equally apparent in the dramatic performances of other countries, and that the study to which this essay is designed to draw attention is worthy of pursuit.

H. B. O.

* Male, of course, on account of his superior power and brightness. Cf. *Æsch. Pers.* 228.

TUESDAY ; OR, ST. THOMAS'S DAY

CHAPTER IV.

"The plagues of Egypt and the curse of Heaven,
 Earth's barrenness and all men's hatred,
 Inflict upon them, thou great *Primus Motor* !
 And here, upon my knees,
 I ban their souls to everlasting pains."

Marlow.

THE character of the archbishop has been strangely misrepresented. He was neither the miracle of sanctity bigoted admirers imagined, nor the heartless supercilious hypocrite their opponents have described. His devotion had a sufficient alloy of human weakness. The gay vanities of youth adhered to him till after he was Lord Chancellor ; but when he became the head of the English Church they were sternly dismissed. Then, it appeared to him, the august minister of the Ruler of kings was forbidden to yield to any temporal sovereign aught the surrender of which could diminish or endanger the influence of the Church. Haughty by nature, he deemed his pride consecrated when manifested in connection with religion. Unbending, where a pious principle was to be asserted, his firmness was the subject of just eulogy ; the meekness, the humility of Him he professed to follow, were never conspicuous in the archbishop. The arrogance imputed to him he identified with devotion. Pomp and riches were valued, not for themselves, but because what they gave, in men's eyes, increased the importance of the station he held. If he fiercely pursued opponents, he fully persuaded himself that it was not for personal revenge, but to punish those who, assailing him, proved themselves the dire enemies of religion.

He had been tutor to King Henry's eldest son. That son, also named Henry, the monarch caused to be crowned while he himself lived and Becket was away. Becket felt all the eager desire of a courtier to approach his old pupil. With no lack of that prudence which is said to dispose calculating groundlings to offer an apple to the proprietor of an orchard, he had provided three superb chargers to be sent as a present to the junior monarch. Such animals were rarely seen ; and these, forwarded to young Henry at Woodstock, where he was then established, the archbishop prepared to follow, with all the gorgeous pageantry he had learned to consider was properly assumed by the faithful ministers of an unassuming Master, who knew not "where to rest His head." Becket

would have been more than man had he regarded with indifference the homage offered to him. He did not feel personally vain of the position he occupied; he believed that it was only valued by him inasmuch as it brought honour to the Church of God.

Before leaving Canterbury he directed that Elfrida, still retaining the disguise of a page, should continue in the care of Robert. Subsequently she was, as heretofore, to reside with him for a time at Merton; but thither they were not to proceed till after the return of the archbishop from Woodstock, where he was assured a most honourable reception awaited him. It was known the young king had not that affection for a father who had prematurely placed a crown on his head which was at all likely to abate the pleasure he might experience at seeing again the far-famed instructor of his youth, who had mortified and humbled that father. Becket advanced with the lofty bearing of a victorious potentate. Each place through which he passed felt honoured by his presence, and when he approached the metropolis a vast concourse of citizens met him on the road. Every hand and every tongue were active in offering mirthful demonstrations of gratified expectation.

During his absence, Canterbury became more tranquil. Elfrida enjoyed the calm, but dwelt with much satisfaction on the honours rendered to the primate. She, however, could not repress the utterance of a thought which often occurred to her, that, notwithstanding what had been so happily witnessed, the information of which Reuben de Moreville was the bearer ought not to be slighted. That was readily admitted by the canon, who, however, remarked a young man could not have surmised such extraordinary honours would celebrate the archbishop's return, as had astonished and completely taken him by surprise who might lay claim to the experience of more than threescore and ten years. Elfrida commented on the happiness which was theirs, to find themselves in security where danger had been feared; but she adverted to certain striking passages in the archbishop's sermon, when telling his auditory that "here we have no continuing city;" and these recalled to her words that had escaped him, touching the uncertainty of life, as if a warning from another world had brought to him the awful conviction that he stood on the verge of the grave. The canon was of opinion, that for wise purposes such admonishing intimations had in some cases been given.

"Believe you then, holy sir," she said, "that communications from the world beyond the grave *can* be made to living men?"

"To me," he replied, "such have not been vouchsafed; but it is strongly attested that the spirits of the departed have heretofore revisited the world, from which, in the course of nature, they had been withdrawn."

"That I could almost say," Elfrida remarked, "is the belief of young De Moreville. To him a spectral form appeared at Merton, under remarkable circumstances. Such was his impression. Could this consist with Nature's laws?"

"All Nature's laws have not been revealed to mortal man; but the fathers of the Church have held, that where a foul crime has been perpetrated, the dead may forsake their tombs in order to visit guilt; or, in other cases, to make known where buried treasures might be found."

"Has gold, then," Elfrida inquired, "such surpassing worth, that those no more on earth may be recalled, to bring it to the light of day? Think you not, sir, this is most strange?"

"Not where the finding thereof may benefit the Church, and thus tend to man's salvation."

"What Reuben told he saw pointed to no such result."

"I have said, not on such errands alone return the dead."

"Foul crime you named."

"Not in his case is crime imputed," Robert hurriedly remarked; "I mean *to him*." He significantly added—"Would all the house of Moreville were as stainless!"

"Could what he saw have reference to a sinful deed wrought by another of his family?"

"I cannot say that it had not."

"Then you, good father, know the portrait in the Lebanon Cedar parlour at Merton, at the midnight hour presented itself to his view."

"Not the picture!" the canon hastily exclaimed.

"Not the picture!" Elfrida repeated; "was it then, indeed, something more?"

"I said not that," the canon replied, in a faltering voice.

"What, then, might it be?"

"I was not with him when that of which he spoke met his startled view."

"But you, sir, were near at hand."

"I was."

"And," Elfrida resumed, "you know the history of the picture. Reuben gazed on what he thought the image of one who had ceased to belong to this world. Had it been the picture itself, methinks that would almost have given evidence of unearthly agency."

"No, no. The features there portrayed—a strong resemblance of them he thought he recognised."

"And the fair original. May I ask where she is?"

"She sleeps in death."

"How marvellous!" Elfrida exclaimed. "Could it be her troubled spirit that he saw? Was awful crime laid to her charge, or was she the victim of crime?"

"The tale is a sad one. At a fitter time my memory's store shall be yours. The cloud, the curse, that hangs over all the De Morevilles I will make known."

"Over *all*, said you, sir?—even over Reuben?" Elfrida mournfully inquired.

"I named him not. But of this no more at present. One comes in haste. How now, Peter Fitz-Canute!" The canon called to a monk who suddenly entered, panting for breath. "You seem excited. What hath chanced?"

"Let my abruptness be pardoned. Joy will be rude," said the monk. "I have ridden from the port to make known that a messenger from London has brought glad tidings of the progress of the archbishop. All the monks at Sandwich were delighted; but I could not indulge a selfish joy, and, therefore, coveted to impart the comfortable news to you and this comely youth, his favourite relative, I may presume."

"Thanks for your good intent! What is told of the prelate?"

"London, so to speak, is transported to know a priest so holy is within her limits. Great are the honours rendered to him by all degrees of men. Pale, dim, and mean, are those accorded to King Henry himself, when he appears among the citizens, in comparison with those the archbishop has to acknowledge!"

"This," said the canon, "is glorious!—Enjoy it, Edwy Harfleur!" turning to Elfrida.—"Where rests he now?" he asked of Peter.

"For the present he is lodged in the Bishop of Winchester's palace in Southwark; anon he is to proceed in bright—I might say, regal—array to the young king, who expects his coming with the impatience of a lover. This, I see, pleases you; and your young companion's eyes overflow with rapturous tears."

"Heed not the boy!"

"I cannot choose but look on him; he has the cardinal's lofty forehead—fairer, by reason of his tender years—and his whole countenance images his patron relative."

"You discompose the youth. Such praises, in presence of the subject of them, may well be spared."

"I say no more. Far be it from me to offend. This only would I add: if at any time my poor services could benefit or pleasure one I judge dear to the good prelate, most readily would they be offered."

"Your love I thank, Peter. Not at this moment will it be severely tasked."

Peter renewed his kind assurances, remarking he could not be severely tasked who found it a pleasure to serve. This was uttered with all the sincerity which humility commonly feels when approaching affluence; and after partaking of a morning repast, he took leave of the canon and Elfrida.

It was uncertain how long the young monarch would desire his visitor to remain at Woodstock. Possibly he might be permitted to depart at the end of a week; but it was judged not unlikely that his absence from Canterbury would be prolonged for a month. The studies and pious exercises which ordinarily occupied the canon were resumed, and continued from day to day. Participation in them abated the impatience of Elfrida to see her father again. Tuesday had returned, Becket was not expected, when a shout without interrupted their readings, and announced that the archbishop had already re-entered Canterbury. Robert and Elfrida looked at each other in speechless amazement, which was not abated when the archbishop appeared; for though he accosted them with his wonted kindness, they remarked an air of vexation and displeasure such as, till then, they had not noted of late. Few and cautious were their inquiries, but he sought not to conceal that he felt deeply aggrieved.

“‘Put not your faith in kings!’” he exclaimed; “for truly is it written, ‘in them there is no salvation.’ This is the reward for all my services.”

Thus speaking, he paced the apartment, with a frowning aspect, in angry rumination. It has been mentioned, in a preceding page, that the fond folly of the king, during the long absence of Becket, desiring to crown his eldest son, the coronation ceremony had been performed by the Archbishop of York, assisted by the Bishops of London and Salisbury. This affront to the Archbishop of Canterbury, Becket expected the young monarch would join with him to pursue, seeing that he was prepared to prove the prince had been mocked with a sham consecration, where the presence and active services of the primate were wanting. He doubted not Henry the Third, as the prince was now to be called, shared his feelings on this subject. It was therefore his first care to announce—his splendid present having been forwarded—that he was on his way to Woodstock. The grandeur of his display at Southwark, in the palace of Henry of Blois, Bishop of Winchester, and brother of the late King Stephen, gave him vast importance in the eyes of the citizens of London, which was not a little augmented by the report that he was about leaving for Woodstock, there to be the guest of the crowned son of the reigning monarch. Gorgeous preparations had been made for his departure; all London expected a new pageant, when an order was received from the young king forbidding the archbishop's approach, and commanding him forthwith to return to Canterbury. This affront, so humiliating to the prelate, exasperated and distressed him. He was unable to imagine the views which gave it birth. Deeply resenting it, his courage was so far subdued that he yielded prompt obedience.

"Was it for this," he demanded, addressing Robert of Merton, "that I left Normandy, where pious honours are still rendered to the chosen ministers of religion, to be insulted by a half-crowned boy? Thinks this shadow of a king that after such an outrage offered to Him whose consecrated servant I am that ever I will bow down to his footstool and swear fealty to a royal ingrate? This never shall be—never!"

The canon, being a man of peace, applied himself to calm the irritation thus evinced. He flattered himself that he had succeeded, when a letter from London communicated the unwelcome intelligence that a vessel laden with wine, sent by the senior monarch, so it was said, from France, for Becket's use, had been seized by Randolph de Broc. This, added to the previous subject of complaint, he concluded was sanctioned by Henry the Third. To the incensed prelate it appeared that the gift was but a mockery, and that the son was not indisposed to assist the malevolence of the father.

An outrage so impious as the seizure of a bishop's wine made Becket feel that the Anglican Christian Establishment was in imminent danger of utter ruin. A new paroxysm of holy rage was produced by the intelligence, which did not subside on the following day, when another missive made known that by the interference of the young king the wine had been given up. The predominant thought or feeling was that he had been insulted by malice, which apprehension only had arrested in its course apprehension growing on the recollection that power had been given to him by the Pope which no temporal monarch could safely attempt to control.

If he could justly be deemed proud and resentful, his enemies were indefatigable and unrelenting. New annoyances were deliberately offered. Ranulph de Broc having surrendered the wine, consoled himself for the loss by hunting the archiepiscopal deer in the woods of Canterbury; and, adding cruel mockery to injury, he or his brother on Christmas-eve cut off the tails of a sumpter mule and a horse belonging to the prelate.

Still regarding every injury he sustained as an attack on the Church he was bound to defend, nay, more, as assailing through him its Divine Author—*Cælum ipsum petimus stultitia!* he would fiercely, mournfully exclaim: "The wretches, not content with wounding me, would further carry their brutal insolence to the God I adore."

Christmas-day, that day which of all others should promote peace on earth and goodwill to man, opened on him while such distracting thoughts agitated his swelling bosom. He had gone through the midnight mass in a humble tone, not with his wonted animation; but for any deficiency that might be remarked then he more

than made up as the morning advanced. High mass was to be celebrated; but before its commencement he appeared in the pulpit, and selected from the Gospel of St. Luke for his text a passage appropriate to the service of the day, which he thus read: "Glorye be in higheste thinges to God, and in erthe pees be to men of good wille."

Little in accordance with the benign lesson conveyed in those words were the feelings which had then possession of the preacher. His own wrongs he could not for a moment put aside. The view he took of them, as already explained, imposed upon him the solemn task of visiting their authors with exemplary punishment.

He opened his discourse by lamenting the absence of "peace on earth and good-will to men" in those latter times, as found in other days, while the sainted fathers of the Church were still on earth, whose remains hallowed the ground enclosed by those sacred walls. With those, he remarked, rested one glorious martyr, St. Alphage, who, fighting the battle of the faith with the ungodly Danes, had gloriously laid down his mortal existence in the cause of his heavenly Master. He added, looking to the tomb of the saint on the north side of the high altar, "the bones of another who still labours to oppose the children of Satan will probably soon be laid by his side, the victim of a fate not less severe."

He spoke with the eloquence of deep feeling, which commanded not only the anxious attention, but the liveliest sympathies of all present. Each listener breathed short, and tears glistened in many eyes. From this lament he passed to a bolder strain. To the recollection of injury succeeded the sense of power: the crime, deplored with pathetic sensibility was now to be denounced with fiery indignation. The docked tail of his sumpter mule he brought forward with bitter severity. Such a theme for pulpit eloquence seems to have carried the Archbishop far beyond all reasonable limits. By his faithful servant, Herbert, he was described as presenting the aspect of the prophetic beast recorded in the Apocalypse, to have "cried with a loud voice as when a lion roareth, and when he had cried seven thunders uttered their voices." He took no middle-course, he looked for no compromise, and in the most unmeasured terms descanted on the atrocities of which the De Brocs stood accused; he described them to be unworthy of the breath of life, and bestowed all those maledictions which the Church and its most valued defenders agreed to regard as proper to be breathed by a mortal against his fellow-men. Certain clerical offenders were included, who had been so forgetful of what they owed to duty as to become incumbents of vicarages without his sanction. He cursed them in the name of the Holy Trinity; and called on the Saviour of the world to blot them out from the

assembly of the saints; to allow them no rest in this world and no salvation in the world to come.

The mind of Becket was relieved by this outpouring of his wrath. He presided with his wonted assiduity and composure at the Feast of the Nativity, and celebrated mass on the two following days, which were the feast-days of St. Stephen and St. John. Those who were immediately about his person hoped the worst that was to be apprehended had now passed; but on Sunday he despatched Herbert in haste with a message to the King of France, in consequence, it was supposed, of a letter warning him that he might expect treachery, that a new plot had been formed against his life. It is beyond all doubt that King Henry, importuned by the Pope and the King of France to make peace with Becket, had never been sincerely reconciled to the haughty prelate, who, consenting to obey the king, added, "saving the honour of God and the Church." This involved a claim that Churchmen should only be tried for any offence they committed by Churchmen. Henry complained that Becket pretended whatever gave him power was for the honour of the Deity, and that the authority he claimed stopped little short of rebellion.

The archbishop affected to treat lightly the warning he had received, but the canon urged that the danger to which it pointed ought not to be disregarded. It was a duty, he said, which the prelate owed to that body of which he was the head, not recklessly to expose his person. Becket, since the mortifying repulse he had received, saw, or thought he saw, that the admiration and affection of which he had previously been the object, had declined in Canterbury. Still, he disdained to acknowledge alarm, and held himself in any case superior to the fear of death.

"Yet think not lightly, sir, of what has been told," sighed Elfrida, while her heart palpitated with wild alarm. "Reflect, this seems but to confirm what Reuben de Moreville generously laboured to make known. He would not bring to your ear a falsehood; then ponder well on the means of defeating the dark designs of your foes and the foes of religion."

Becket proudly answered—"Spare yourself these wild alarms. The loud-tongued boasters who valiantly threaten in my absence, tremble and hide their pusillanimous heads where I appear. As the lamp of Gideon scattered the wretched Midianites in helpless disorder, so the fire of eternal wrath, seen through me, shall fill these reptile plotters with dismay. Fear not for your father!"

His natural courage, and his devotion to the cause in which his whole soul was engaged, forbade him to suffer any abatement of his confidence to appear; but sadness came over his heart when he noticed the agonising terrors which shook the fair frame of Elfrida,

of whom it might then have been said, in the words of a modern poet—

“For, from those lips were uttered sighs
That more than fever scorched the frame,
And tears were rained from those bright eyes,
That from the heart like life-blood came.”

CHAPTER V.

“No man has more contempt than I of breath,
But whence hast thou the right to give me death?”

DRYDEN.

No fact is better established than the deep impression made on Becket's mind that his days were numbered. That he feared death he could not acknowledge even to himself; but speeches repeatedly fell from his tongue which told that he had a presentiment that his name would speedily be added to the list of martyrs, and though Christmas Day was past, he should cease to live before the close of the year. His proud heart was not inaccessible to sorrow. The dignity of the archbishop could not subdue the anxiety of the parent. There were certain dispositions which he wished to make for his daughter's future comfort; but her distress, when the dangers impending over him were mentioned, restrained him from entering on the subject with her. To the venerable Robert he occasionally communicated his anticipations and his wishes. Circumstances corroborating the warning he had received by letter were from day to day pressed on his attention. The prelates he had excommunicated, believing they had sinned against the authority of Becket beyond all hope of pardon, had, immediately after his return, fled to prefer their complaint to the king, who was then staying at Bar, near Caen. Henry, once his friend and boon companion, was now taught to regard the archbishop as a base ingrate—as a serpent prepared to sting the bosom which had warmed him into greatness; the representations made by the bishops aggravated displeasure into fury. Swelling with rage, he started from his chair, and while his inflamed eyes were almost bursting from their orbits, exclaimed, or rather shouted—

“The presumptuous wretch! this fellow who came to my court on a lame sumpter mule; then, all his worldly wealth having been nourished by my hands, and loaded with benefits which ought to have commanded undying gratitude, he now dares to insult his king, and lord it over the nation—as he pretends, in the cause of Heaven?”

The justice of the monarch's remarks were unhesitatingly applauded by those to whom they were uttered, and one loyal courtier could not refrain from saying such insolence was more than any anointed king could safely brook from a rebellious subject.

"You say well," Henry quickly returned ; "and what sluggard cowards must compose my court, who, forgetful of their allegiance, can see their master thus trampled upon by a low-born priest, yet fear to draw a sword in his just defence !"

With these words the king abruptly withdrew, to indulge his gloomy reflections in the solitude of his chamber. The wrath of the monarch, expressed aloud, was heard by many of his attendants, and repeated with characteristic exaggerations. Deep and memorable were the impressions made on the listeners. It was even reported to Becket that more than one of them had sternly declared the stain of cowardice should not remain on them, if it could be washed away by a tyrannical Churchman's blood !

These were not words lightly spoken. In after days it was known that four knights, Reginald Fitzurse, William de Tracy, Richard le Bret, and Hugh de Moreville, who had previously been associated with the De Brocs in hostility to Becket, considered that they had now a royal warrant to give full scope to their animosity, by avenging their own wrongs in the name of the king.

With all haste they left Bayeux ; but to avoid suspicion of their plot, took different routes to England, and all, without accident, reached Saltwood Castle, the abode of their friend, Ranulph de Broc, on the 28th of December. From him they received a cordial welcome. The vengeful purpose of their coming he approved, as the excommunications launched against him by their common enemy, disposed him to further any enterprise that tended to the humiliation, ruin, or destruction of the hated archbishop.

That night they sat in council to devise the means of accomplishing their object. It was not a long sitting, but it was a solemn scene. No lamp, no taper shed its feeble ray on their dismal meeting. Light was rigorously excluded from the apartment ; the conspirators desired to assemble in sepulchral darkness. In the twelfth century in certain cases such meetings were not very unfrequent, where desperate designs were to be considered. They were supposed to invite bold unreserved disclosures. Where the deed contemplated was to be the act of all, it was desirable, so far as might be, to guard against the recognition of individuals. Voices could, to some extent, be disguised, and, faces unseen, the speakers might not with certainty be known.

The night was appropriately sombre ; the conspirators found themselves seated in mysterious obscurity, and for a time profound silence prevailed. They met not for display, but to resolve. Ambitious oratory had no place there. All meditated ; each was disposed to hear ; none impatient to speak.

At length a voice was raised.

"Friends to the king, we meet," said the speaker, "to vindicate his authority. His cause is ours."

"His cause is ours," was murmured in reply.

A third spoke.

"Our object—to repress insolence, and humble overweening audacity."

"And sanctified hypocrisy," said another conspirator.

"And to defend our rights," added the third speaker.

All cordially responded—"Amen."

"Be it ours," the first resumed, "to meet outrage with unflinching determination."

No dissent was returned.

"Agreed on this; more needs not as to our object. We have only to decide on the means."

"United action," one answered.

"United action," each repeated.

"And when?"

"Forthwith—to-morrow."

"Is this the will of all?"

"To this inquiry, a hoarse determined voice, it was that of the first speaker, made answer,

"It is."

"It is," was echoed by each member of that angry assembly.

Then the first voice, it was that of Fitzurse, was again heard.

"Our arms are prepared. Before another day has closed, let us seek the upstart Churchman even in his palace, and compel him to withdraw his mad pretensions; force him to revoke his savage excommunications, or trample him in the dust."

"Make him bite it," added one of the conspirators.

"Give him death!" said another.

"Give him death!" was repeated by applauding voices.

The object of the meeting was gained; no time was wasted in further debate. The conference was at an end. Lights were called, and nothing remained but to prepare for the meditated attack on the doomed archbishop.

With the opening of the morrow they bestirred themselves to give effect to their murderous resolution. In the king's name they ordered a troop of soldiers to accompany them to Canterbury, a distance of fifteen miles. At noon they mounted their horses, and commenced their journey along the old Roman road. At Saint Augustine's Abbey, outside the walls of the city, they halted. There they were hospitably entertained by Clarenbald, the abbot, who avowed himself faithful to the king. He joined with them in calling on the Mayor or Provost of Canterbury, to make proclamation that none must presume to resist those who claimed to act in the name of their sovereign.

It was Tuesday, a day which had seemed "big with the fate"

of Becket. The archbishop rose early, and prepared for the religious exercises of the morning. It was soothing to Elfrida to mark the serenity of his countenance; it drew from her an expression of satisfaction at what she considered the improved state of his health.

"My child," he said, "I thank your affection; but for me little health and strength will suffice to carry me to the end of my journey—to the house appointed for all living."

His words reminded her of the dreary presentiment which had, within the last few days, been constantly present to his mind. Elfrida ventured to say—

"Uncertain, sir, is the distance, and I will hope the progress of it shall prove long. Would that my father could withdraw himself from the joyless tumult of conflicting interests and angry passions."

"It may not be."

"Then would peace of mind give health and secure enjoyment."

"Not to Becket. I must continue my onward course, not presuming, like Lot's weak, sinful wife, to look back on the scene which I am leaving."

"Not yet—not yet," sighed Elfrida.

"Sigh not for what may have been ordained in regard to me. Should I, like Alphage, fall by violence, laying down my life in the cause I defend, an undying name will be mine."

"But what," Elfrida tremblingly asked—"what is fame that it should be purchased at the expense of life? Oh! father, be more careful of that which Reuben so anxiously sought to preserve for his sake and for mine!"

"Away with fear! I court not peril."

"Yet omens—strange omens—you have mentioned, and Reuben almost averred me he himself had seen the spirit of one departed approach in the silent hour."

"A boyish fancy which affects not me."

"But let not those awful signs of which you have spoken be disregarded. Your life is so important here, you must not soon be called away."

"Why that, over-valuing, it may be, my own labours, I would fain hope it is so. Yet often moved to anger, pursued by godless enemies, the worn spirit turns to the grave for shelter, as the patriarch's weary dove sought in the ark a refuge from the horrors of a storm-ravaged world."

With eyes upraised in silent meditation, he left to attend the celebration of mass in the cathedral. Thence he passed to the chapter-house. It was afterwards told that he confessed to a monk

who waited there; and who, moreover, inflicted three scourgings on the prelate's back, which his piety claimed as a salutary penance for the welfare of his soul. In the afternoon he dined in the great hall of the palace, with the composure of one who had nothing to fear. He retired with his more intimate friends to his private apartment, which was his bed-chamber, and there, conversing with Robert of Merton, with his chaplain, and Elfrida, he rested as if assured of perfect safety.

OUR TREASURE

A PLAYFUL little rogue is he,
 A laughing, romping, roving boy—
 His father's pride, his mother's joy.
 Erewhile my heart was sad with care,
 And I was growing tired of life—
 Not tired of Jean, my loving wife.
 As one a-wearied with a load,
 I longed for rest—rest anywhere
 Out of this world of grief and care.
 What had I done, I asked myself,
 That so much sorrow should be mine,
 And not one ray of bright sunshine?
 Jean smiled, and bade me not despair:
 "Those clouds," she said, "may yet depart,
 And sunshine warm your drooping heart."
 God bless my Jean! she clings to me
 As ivy to the castle grey,
 Loving me better every day.
 The sunshine came when Willie came;
 And since then till this very hour
 It has not ceased to warm our bower.
 We kissed the helpless thing that lay
 A-sleeping on Jean's throbbing breast,
 And raised our hands—you know the rest.
 My home is now a happy home,
 And I am happy at my toil,
 Cheered by my Jean's and Willie's smile.
 I sometimes think of those sad years
 When my heart bore its weighty load,
 And I had little faith in God.
 And then it is I bow the knee,
 And gazing upwards, bless the day
 My Father took that load away,
 And gave me yonder careless boy,
 And that dear wife, so true to me,
 Whose love now fills my heart with glee.
 Thus years have fled, and every day
 Of those bright years I've happy been,
 Toiling for Willie and for Jean.

J. F.